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Burusho Cultural Summary

by

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Orientation

105 The Burusho are the inhabitants of Hunza and Nagir, two small Burushaski-speaking states in the northeasternmost part of West Pakistan. The area, in the center of the Karakoram Himalaya, consists for the most part of a close-packed mass of peaks and glaciers; a great number of the former being over 20,000 feet high. Where the Hunza River (an affluent of the Gilgit River which flows into the Indus from the north) has cut its way down from the Pamirs there remain a few shallow terraces which are cultivated by the natives of the regions, the Burusho. They speak an isolated language which as yet has not been traced to any major linguistic stock. Comparative population figures are as follows:

	1878	1921	1931
Hunza	6,000	12,117	13,241
Nagir	10,000	14,188	13,672
Totals	16,000	26,305	26,913

The population density in 1931 for Hunza was 3 per square mile, that for Nagir was 9 per square mile -- Nagir being a much smaller kingdom with more level ground. Since almost nothing has been written on the State of Nagir, most of the following refers to Hunza.

105 The original inhabitants of the kingdoms are said to be descended from three soldiers from the army of Alexander the Great. The rulers of the two states (called Thum or Mir) claim actual descent from Alexander, although their families came from Iran about six centuries ago. At any rate, the physical type is definitely Caucasoid and not Mongoloid, with fair complexions, heavy beard, eyes which are usually brown, but sometimes blue or grey.

Economy

Agriculture is the main occupation of nearly all the inhabitants. The major crops are wheat, barley, several kinds of millet, sweet and bitter buckwheat, potatoes (introduced by the British), and several kinds of pulses. Barley seems to have been the original cultigen since it is basic in all festival and ritual foods. Wheaten bread is much preferred, but barley remains the largest crop. Bitter buckwheat is detested, but a good deal of it is planted, since it is a very hardy plant and will resist cold that would kill other grain crops.

They are skilled farmers and have a good knowledge of crop rotation, soils, and climates. All fields are irrigated, the water being carried by kuhls or aqueducts which extend along the mountain faces, some of them for many miles. This is necessary since nearly all of the fields are high above the river level, and rainfall at the levels at

105 which they live (6,000 to 8,000 feet) is meager.

Seed is sown broadcast in the fields. Fields are ploughed with a wooden plough, and the wooden digging stick, shod with iron, is the other major field implement. The fields are manured patiently with aged animal and human manure -- not a scrap of either being wasted.

Their main food is bread, which is made in a large number of varieties, both leavened and unleavened and with the addition of various pounded fruits and grains. Whole milk is not an article of diet. Milk produced by the cattle, sheep, and goats is generally converted into butter (maltash), curds, and other products. Meat is taken perhaps two or three times a year at festive occasions.

The women have small vegetable plots in which they grow carrots, turnips, marrows, gourds, and a great variety of greens. They also have a few tobacco plants, although not much tobacco is smoked.

After grain and greens, the essential items of Hunza diet are the apricot, fresh and dried, and mulberries. A few apples, pears, and peaches are grown, but these are not particularly valued since they do not dry and preserve well. They also grow a few grapes, which are either eaten fresh or made into wine. Since the growing season is so short there usually is not enough time to make them into raisins.

Some herding is also done, principally for milk and wool. The most animals a family usually possesses is a flock of from 20 to 25

105 sheep, goats, and cows. Some of them are pastured during the summer at higher altitudes and are tended by herdsboys.

Each peasant family is almost entirely self-supporting and independent, eating of the produce of its own fields and herds. There is always a period of extreme scarcity in the early springtime, since the production of all crops is low due to the poorness of the soil. The most that can usually be expected is a tenfold crop, with a sevenfold crop being more usual. They would rather starve than use the seed crop which is put away at the end of the harvest. As a result of all this, the diet is quite poor, especially lacking in proteins. However, the population of Hunza as a whole remains relatively free from disease, possibly due to the stringent cleanliness which custom forces on them.

Weaving is done by many families; the men spin the goat hair and the women spin the sheep wool. However, most clothing is made from cotton cloth which is imported. Clothes are kept until worn out, then picked apart and the thread used to make new cloth.

Social Organization

Hunza is a stratified society, with a hereditary ruler, the Tham or Mir, at the top. The "classes" generally are as follows:

1: The Thamo, i.e., the royal family with the Tham or Mir at the head;
2: The Uyôngo or Akàbirtĩng - the "Great," the superior officers of the state, but not of royal blood;

105 3: The Bär, Bäre,or Sis - the cultivators, the bulk of the population;
4: The Shadarsho - the servants, who are exempt from menial labor;
5: The Baldakûyo or Íšlîgalasho - the load carriers;
6: The Bērīcho - the musicians and blacksmiths.

The latter, the Bērícho, are a small community of ultimately Indian origin who were brought in to supply the blacksmith needs of the people. The Wakhi, an immigrant group, live in the higher areas of the kingdom and speak a different language and have a different culture. They are generally considered inferior to the Hunzukuts (inhabitants of Hunza).

Although the society is stratified, there is remarkably little servility in the population. In effect, there are two strata, the royal family and the rest of the people. There is no age stratification, but the elders generally enjoy higher prestige because of their greater experience. There is no great sex status differentiation. Although the Hunzukuts are Moslem, their sect, the Ismaili, does not force them to debase their women and accordingly they have a quite high status. The Nagar belong to a different, more orthodox sect and the situation is accordingly different there.

Social position is indicated more by the condition of clothing and house than by any outward difference in cut or pattern. The people are generally obedient and seldom defy authority unless there is a grave contravention of established custom.

Marriage

105 Although they are Moslems, they retain their old custom of exogamic marriages between the four main clans. Although cross-cousin marriage is the preferred marriage in Islam, it is rarely practiced in Hunza since it savors of incest to them in comparison with the exogamic practice. They very rarely take marriage partners from outside their own Hunza society, although the Mir and his family sometimes exchange wives with the corresponding family in Nagir. Marriage with other groups is almost non-existent. Although polygamy is mentioned in one source, none of the other sources mention this practice, although it probably is permitted.

Child marriages do not take place, but it is very rare that a girl older than 16 or a boy older than 18 is unmarried. A bride price is paid, but it is not large for the poor. It depends on the special status and wealth of the individuals concerned. The Mir's family pays the highest bride price. Divorce is allowed if the wife proves to be incompetent in the management of family affairs, or if husband and wife prove to be incompatible. No stigma is attached to divorce, and widows, widowers, and divorced people commonly remarry.

Inheritance

The majority of peasant families are freeholders. The land passes from generation to generation without tax during life or duty after death.

105 The land is generally not in one piece but in small lots scattered over the area. A woman cannot inherit land. When the father dies, the land is fairly divided among the sons -- the land classified according to the various types of trees on the land, its arability, etc. Although women do not inherit, the men have the obligation to see that the women are successfully taken care of or married. If a wife dies, the husband may remarry again, but if he has had any sons by the first wife he must divide his land equally with these sons. Thus if he had two sons, he will get one-third of the land and only the latter will be passed on to any sons he might have by his second wife. The youngest son inherits the family house, the eldest son inherits the best land.

The Sexes

Man and wife cooperate in their work without embarrassment and no work is taboo for either sex. In work men and women have recognized roles but these roles seem to be regulated by physical capacity and convenience rather than by established custom. There is nothing rigid about these working roles. For instance, usually a woman or girl will drive a ploughing team, but sometimes a man or a boy will take a hand.

The women hold a position of freedom and respect rare in other Eastern societies. It is quite common for a wife to entertain male

105 visitors without her husband being present, and when he arrives he feels no resentment. The women move about freely, unveiled and unaccompanied. They live in extended families, with the son bringing home his wife to live in the father's house. The young couple sleep in the common living room until conception, then they move to the common sleeping platforms, one for the men and one for the women.

Clans

The Hunzukuts are divided into four major clans, which are centered in Baltit, and several minor clans scattered over other villages. These clans are not localized groups since members can be found in every village in Hunza. Exogamous marriage between the clans is the rule. The clans are all of equal status, but the Diramiting clan is considered first in prestige for historical reasons.

Settlements

The Burusho cling to their settlements along the eight or nine mile stretch of the Hunza River below Altit at an altitude of 6,000 to 8,000 feet. They live grouped in several villages along this stretch. The houses are almost indistinguishable from the rocks against which they are built wherever they can stick; since the area is so steep there is no chance for an orderly layout of the villages. The buildings are

105 constructed of mud and stone. In many of them, the pillars supporting the roof, the lintels, friezes, and wainscoting are carved from wood and ornamented. The Hunza dwelling is generally a fortress-like cube whose front door is screened from the hostile mountain air by a barn built onto the house. The door of the barn is strategically placed at right angles to the door of the house and some distance from it. The only ventilation is the central smokehole. The idea is to have a draughtfree house, which is quite necessary in a country so lacking in fuel for fire. In the main part of the house are two sleeping benches arranged along the sides, about 18 inches above the floor. One of these is for the men and the other for the women. The cooking areas are near the ends of the benches. Cooking vessels were originally generally of soapstone, but nowadays aluminum and iron pots and pans are being brought in. Gourds are used as jugs. Spoons and forks are carved from wood or imported.

Administration

The villages are communities which live within definite geographical limits. They were originally centered around the khans (fortified places) which were used for protection before the British entered the area during the 1890s. They have no police. The headmen have no authority generally except for their personal influence and that of the

105 of Pakistan. However, to enter the states it is still necessary to get the acquiescence of the Mirs. General access to the area is still blocked both by the Pakistan government and by the Mirs of Hunza and Nagir.

Religion

The people of Hunza are Mohammedans of the Ismaili (Mauli) sect. They are in no way fanatic. Restrictions, formalities, and ritual are reduced to a minimum. Religious freedom was declared in the state in 1892. There are no mullahs in Hunza, but rather khalifas (lay priests) who are the spiritual leaders or teachers. Religious observances do not play an evident part in Hunza life. The people of Nagir are members of the Shia sect of Islam and are much more strict and orthodox in their observance of the tenets of Islam. The Burusho became converted to Islam about three centuries ago. The people of Hunza became Ismaili heretics about five generations ago.

External Relations

The two states have not been on particularly good terms with each other, particularly since the conversion to Ismailism. In pre-British days, the people had a very bad reputation as warriors and brigands who raided the caravans in Central Asia. They made

105 Mir. There are two or three headmen in most villages. There are a couple of officials in each village who arrange supplies for travelers, and also government appointed men who for a small regular retainer do necessary jobs for the central government. The Mir may deport ill-doers from the country for definite periods.

Each village group is an administrative unit. The Tham (Mir) is represented in it by one to three men who direct his orders to the public. The population is divided into five districts each of which bears one share of rajaki (obligatory labor). These are Baltit, Genish, Altit, Hindi, and Towants.

There is a long series of "courts" for settling disputes. In the first, the heads of the two houses involved and the families have a council. The second is a council of community headmen. Then there is a council of the headmen of the four principal clans. The Mir is the ultimate authority in making legal decisions.

As noted earlier, the Burusho are divided into two states, Nagir and Hunza. A Mir is at the head of each state, but the Mir of Hunza seems to be the more important. Both states were autonomous as regards internal affairs and acknowledged the Maharaja of Kashmir. Since 1947, when Gilgit Agency, which includes these two states, broke from Kashmir, the states have acknowledged the supremacy

105 many slave raids, but usually sold them rather than bringing them back to their own country. Since the British rule in the 1890s they have moved away from their tight-packed villages under the protection of the forts. Warfare as such has become a thing of the past.

Kinship

Although data concerning kinship terminology are poor, the cousin terminology seems to be of the Hawaiian type, i.e., all cousins are either equated with siblings or called by terms clearly derivative from those for siblings. This is reflected in the marriage pattern in which, contrary to Islamic custom, cross-cousin marriage is not the preferred type and in fact is very rare.

Conclusion

Burusho culture as of this date seems to be fairly stable, although contact with the outside world is increasing. Many Hunzukuts work for brief periods in Pakistan and probably as a result mild epidemics of infectious disease which were rare are becoming more common. Contact with the outside world will probably remain fairly limited for some time to come, however, in view of the complicated international situation, since China (i.e. Tibet) is along one border and Kashmir is quite close.

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116 **TEXTS--a full set of pages from each processed source, arranged in page order, as a means of establishing the context for any particular slip. Sets are arranged in the numerical order of the sources. See also:**

Literary texts 539

John H. Tobe

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HUNZA

Adventures in a LAND OF PARADISE

RODALE BOOKS, INC., *Emmaus, Penna.*

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CHAPTER 28

Old Baltit Fort

122 SOME TIME BEFORE 6 o'clock in the morning a tray containing a huge pot of tea, cups, sugar and biscuits was brought into our room and placed on a table between our beds. The servant quietly departed.

Friend Cecil[1] was feeling much better this morning and wanted to get up and about, but the doctor had ordered that he remain in bed.

So, sharp at 8 o'clock, after saying good morning and cheerio to Cecil, I trotted down the stairs. At the landing there was young Jahangir waiting for me. I had made a rendezvous with him for this time—the thought being that we should have breakfast together so as to give less trouble to the Mir or his household.

The doctor came up a moment later and said that he would go up and visit his patient and would meet us at the Mir's table.

Both the Mir and the Rani were expecting us and

[1] [i.e. Cecil Brunton - Analyst]

after the usual greetings, he asked how Cec was doing. 122

"He seems to be quite a bit better today!"

"I'm awfully sorry he had to leave last night," said the Mir.

I didn't think he'd even noticed it—but he had.

"The doctor is up visiting him now," I told him. "He said he would join us in a few minutes."

"What does he usually have for breakfast?" the Mir asked me.

"Oatmeal, poached or soft boiled eggs, toast, jam and coffee would be wonderful if they are available."

"Not only is it available," said the Mir, "it is ready, for that is part of the breakfast we usually prepare for our guests. It will be taken up to him immediately."

A signal and a few words in Burushaski and Cecil's breakfast was well on its way up.

So we had breakfast in the dining room and chatted 124
and I sought to make every moment count by asking questions that were vital to me . . . that is, questions about Hunza.

I am quite sure that the Rani understood most of [191]
the things that we talked about. She could not have been shamming as she looked both interested and charming while the conversation went on.

"I have arranged for an interpreter to accompany 124
you on your trips and you can go wherever you like, 115
providing you can get through and the roads are open," 191
the Mir told us.

Shortly after, Sultan Ali appeared. He was the schoolmaster and also taught the Mir's children at home. He was to be our interpreter and guide. He was a slender, handsome young man. I'd judge his age as being in the early twenties. His command of English was very good. But I don't think his English was up to the standard spoken by the Mir, who spoke so fluently

124
115 that one would never believe that it was only a second-
191 ary language to him.

231 "You know," I said to the Mir, "one of the things
115 that I wanted to see when I came to Hunza was a yak.
I understand from my readings that yaks are used in this part of the country and I have been looking everywhere as I walked along the road to Baltit, but I have as yet seen no sign of a yak!"

"That is not hard to explain," the Mir said. "The yaks are further up in the mountains. They cannot stand the heat and we keep them in the higher altitudes where they can be comfortable. If they are brought to the lower altitudes, they suffer. They like to be up around 11,000 feet or higher."

"Well, then how can I get up to see them?" I asked. "I don't mind if I have to walk for a day or two, but see them I must!"

"I'll do better than that," said the Mir. "I will phone and have two yaks brought down as quickly as possible. They will have to come from Passu which is about 38 miles from here. I will have action taken at once and see that the yaks are provided."

115 (Does that not indicate to you the kind of man and
124 host was the Mir of Hunza?)

I then took my leave of the Mir and the Rani and went out with Sultan Ali and Jahangir to look, see, pry and ask questions.

344 Our first jaunt was a good stiff climb to the old
644 palace located about two miles from the Mir's new
palace. As the crow would fly I'm sure it would not have been more than ¾ of a mile. But in order to get up there one has to wend and weave and climb slowly.

I was now becoming quite accustomed to the altitude. Kerimabad is up about 8500 feet and I am sure

that the old palace is up at least another 500 or 600 344
feet. It was perched precariously on a huge outcropping 644
of rock that jutted straight up into the air and the entire surface of the pinnacle was used for the building. There was no superfluous area surrounding it.

I had a long list of questions prepared and I knew 124
even before I started that Sultan Ali could not give me all the answers because many of the questions were strictly horticultural—others dealt with dietary principles. I wanted to talk to farmers and individual people and housewives on both of these subjects.

I asked if he could arrange to take me to a group of farmers or even an individual farmer . . . that is, farmers who were capable and efficient—the better, the more intelligent and prosperous ones . . . so that I might delve into their ways and means of field husbandry.

He nodded, "This will be done. When would you like to talk to them?"

"Tomorrow morning, if it can be done," I replied.

"That's fine. I will arrange it!"

Wherever it was possible, I wanted to get my information direct from the people concerned. There is 565
actually only one class of people in Hunza and one
occupation, which is farming. I only know of one shop 463
in the area and it sells mostly goods that have been 443
brought in by the Chinese caravans that have passed 439
through. I don't doubt also that there were some goods in this same shop that came into Hunza via Rawalpindi and Gilgit.

However, it was plain and clear that 900 of the citi- 121
zens of Hunza out of 1000 made their living by means 463
of farming. Therefore, as I had come to Hunza pri- 241
marily to study the farming and horticultural methods of the people, the preparation of the foods they ate,

121 and of course the kinds and varieties of foods that were used, I attached great importance to this phase of my trip and I was definitely determined that, come what might, this information I would have thoroughly and in detail.

124 No doubt it would have been an advantage had I been able to speak either Urdu, or better still Burushaski, so that I could frame my questions as I saw fit and have answers that would be direct and would not require translation. However, that was not possible. Still, I had no reason to believe that my interpreter would not be a forthright individual who would give me the answers that were relayed to him clearly and to the point.

Mind you, I was seeking no miracle or world panacea. I wanted to find out the simple truth!

Further, I wanted to walk from farm to farm . . . that is, just selecting one at random here and there. I wanted to view the farmer's activities, study his soil and examine it, ask a few questions and thus, I could gather the information that I wanted and which was so vital to me.

344
644 The old palace proved to be in a good state of preservation. I wondered, because of its good condition, why someone didn't live there. Many of the rooms were still furnished. There were even rugs and tapestries placed and hung in their original positions.

[126] When we climbed to the top of the castle—that is, to the roof where I snapped many photos—it seemed mighty high and overlooked everything around us. But [133] in the distance were mountains that were well over 20,000 feet—and that is no exaggeration, but more likely an understatement.

There was a railing around this upper balcony and from this balcony you could walk into other chambers.

These chambers were once living rooms and bedrooms. It reminded me of a penthouse. While it didn't have an elevator to whiz you upwards in a matter of seconds or the best in modern plumbing, it did have the air, the view, the history and fascination that no penthouse in creation could match. 344 644

Back about 400 years ago one of the rulers of Hunza married a daughter of the King of Baltistan who, as a gift to his daughter and her husband, dispatched 500 workmen from his country to Hunza to erect the Baltit Fort that we now know. The rulers of Hunza dwelt in that fort and made it their palace until recent times. The present Mir, too, when he took office after the death of his father, resided in this palace known as Baltit Fort. 173 648 712

The new palace, in which we were being wined, dined and entertained, had been completed recently and was taken possession of by the present Mir about 7 years ago. Actually though, the new palace was started by the Mir's grandfather back as far as 1925. 122

While we were guests at the palace, extensive masonry work was in progress as the Mir was having a broad, low, stone-walled veranda erected. This, I understand, would be used, on completion, as his court, where the citizens of Hunza would come with their problems and where the Mir would preside in judgment. 692 643

However, this work in no way interfered with the normal functions of the household, for, even as the people of Hunza follow the custom of moving upstairs for the summer and downstairs for the winter, so did the Mir. 342

To me, however, old Baltit Fort was an edifice of distinction, charm and beauty and if I were in the Mir's place, I would never have abandoned it.

344 644 712 727 [175] This massive old fortress, for that is what it was, was actually one of the places that had withstood the attacks of invaders for more than 400 years and remained impregnable. It has only once been in enemy hands since the day it was built and that was in 1891, when, after the Battle of Nilt, it was occupied by the British. Records further indicate that the British added no glory to their occupation at the time because of their indiscriminate looting of the treasures found in the palace. But the Mir, whether because of his friendship for the British or because of his desire to tell the truth, claimed that it was not the British who looted it, but the Dogra troops who were under British command.

344 644 352 Here I would like to quote from E. F. Knight's *Where Three Empires Meet:*

"This massive fortress, which has been for hundreds of years the secure stronghold of the robber kings, inviolate until this day, stands boldly out, set in the midst of a sublime landscape . . . Twigg, Boisragon and myself took up our quarters in the most comfortable chamber we could find, which we soon discovered to have been the apartment of the ladies belonging to the [643] Thum's harem. ("Thum" is Burushaski for ruler, sovereign, king, chief, "Mir". Used especially of the hereditary rulers of the states of Hunza and Nagir.) It was surrounded by a low, broad, wooden divan, on which our bedding was laid. Pillars of carved wood rose from the edge of the divan to the carved beams of the roof, blackened by the smoke of ages. . . . A fire was lit in the open fireplace at one end of the floor, the smoke escaping through a square hole in the roof. Save for the Oriental pattern of the wooden carvings it was just a hall, I imagine, as King Canute might have lived in. . . . We enjoyed a delicious night's rest after our late fatigues.

727 344 644 “We were up betimes on December 23rd, and proceeded to rummage all the nooks and corners of the deserted palace. We had heard that the treasures of many a pillaged caravan . . . were stored here, so the search was an exciting one. The tribesmen had been informed that, provided they gave up their arms, their property would be respected by us. . . But the possessions of the fugitive Thum were declared to be forfeited, so we set to work to collect together all the valuables that were to be found in the place, individual looting being of course forbidden. . . . We were informed that the Thum had made all his preparations for flight long before his defeat at Nilt, and . . . had carried off the bulk of his wealth with him across the Hindoo Koosh. . . . Still, they had not taken all, and we raked together a curious and miscellaneous collection of odds and ends scattered about and secreted away in the various chambers and cellars.”

344 644 On two sides this mighty fortress (and it is a mighty fortress for that part of the world) is protected by abysses.

[126] As the views of the mountains and the surrounding country from the balconies were unrivaled, I took many colored photographs and with each click of the shutter I hoped for the best.

411 I noticed a marvelous old firing piece, gun or matchlock. I don’t know how to describe these things as I am not very familiar with firearms. However, I found out that this was a genuine treasure and was almost as old as the fort itself.

It was a most unusual firing piece. By actual measurement it was 6 feet long, elegantly and extravagantly decorated with silver and gold, and bore the inscription “946 A.H.”

353 What had evidently been an old calendar portray-

353 ing an excellent likeness of Queen Victoria in full color hung on the old palace wall. It was still in good condition and told you to use "Mellins Food for Infants and Invalids." I suspect this picture calendar has been hanging there for some 60 years (it was dated 1899). Both the producer of the calendar and the food people could well be proud of the record.

123 One could easily spend a few days in and around the fort and probably write a volume about its history. But I'll leave that for someone else.

I made a careful round of all the rooms in the old palace and by that time Sultan Ali remarked that we'd best be retracing our steps to the Mir's because the Mir had asked him to bring me back in time for lunch, which was at 1.30. So we started our descent.

CHAPTER 29

Hunzan Crafts and Skills

THE NEXT MORNING Jahangir came to our quarters just as I was ready to leave for breakfast. Cec again remained in bed on the doctor's advice. out

The Mir was waiting for us in his bright, pleasant sun room when we entered and with him was another handsome, beaming man whom he introduced as his brother, Ayesh, who had just returned from a trip up country. 124 115 644

It is customary for the Mir's oldest brother to remain unmarried and act as an advisor, assistant, secretary or whatever else this position might be termed. He also acted as the Mir's emissary and was the engineer of the electric light outfit in operation at the palace. [373]

We were then ushered into the dining room for breakfast. The Mir, Ayesh and the Rani seated themselves just to keep us company and of course add delight and conversation while we breakfasted.

124 "You understand," he said, "that the reason I do
[788] not have breakfast with you is due entirely to the fact that I must rise at 3:30 every morning to perform my religious duties . . . and 'tis then I have my morning meal."

"Thank you most sincerely for your explanation. It is most important to me so I may better understand the ways of your people and yourself."

Then the Mir went on, "I have received word that two yaks are being brought down from Passu and should arrive at Altit some time during the night and will be there tomorrow morning."

Then I said to the Mir, "Would it be all right if I walked to Altit and rode one of the yaks back here to your palace?"

"That's exactly what I had in mind for you," said the Mir.

"Well, seeing there are two yaks coming down, as you mentioned, and my friend Cec is confined to his quarters by the doctor, I'll take Jahangir along and he'll ride the other yak back."

"Fine, fine!" said the Mir.

124 Then the conversation continued and the Mir said,
115 "I have another brother and I certainly hope you will
644 have an opportunity to meet him. He is serving in the Pakistan army—as a captain. I expect him back within the next 3 or 4 days and you will enjoy meeting him, I know. He is a most likable and interesting man. I hope he gets here before you decide to leave."

"I'd be very happy to meet him and I, too, hope he arrives before we depart."

"We call him Salat," he said. "That means mous-
[302] tache in our language. He has one of those handlebar moustaches and he's a big man—bigger than either Ayesh or I. His proper name is Capt. Jamshed Khan."

Ayesh was a most jovial character. He had the most pleasant smiling happy countenance of any man I've ever met. He was always either laughing or smiling and every time I looked at him I had to smile as well. He was a handsome man but in contrast to the Mir, who had a good head of dark hair, Ayesh was balding, the same as I. 124 115 [644] 142]

It was most pleasant to see the splendid cordial relationship that existed between him and the Mir's entire family.

"How are you coming along with your quest for information?" asked the Mir.

"Exceptionally well, sir," I replied. "But there are also many questions that only you can answer and I'm hoping that you can spare a few minutes some time within the next few days in private so that I may gain this information."

"Any time you say," replied the Mir pleasantly. "I'm at your disposal. You mention the time and that will be it."

"You are indeed very kind to grant me this great favor and I appreciate it," I said.

So there and then we made an appointment for 5 o'clock the following day.

Every meal at the Mir's was a joy and a delight and both the Mir and the Rani were always present. I had already mentioned to him that this was a trouble and an imposition and too much to expect of him. But he said that it was the way he wanted it and that nothing was too good and no effort too great for his guests. Well, what can you do with a man like that? 122 574

Then he informed me concerning my friend's health. "The doctor has things under control now," he told me, "but he will remain here with me as my guest at the palace during your stay so there will be no worries 122 758

122 [758] or cares in regard to Mr. Brunton's condition. The doctor will attend to his duties at Aliabad and look after the hospital there . . . but he only has one or two patients and he will be back and forth from the hospital to the palace. Therefore he will be in constant touch with your friend."

"No man could do more," I assured the Mir. "I don't know how we can ever thank you enough."

"Don't mention it," he said. "You have been very kind, too."

"Now is there anything that you would like me to get for you while you're here? I wish you would tell me because some things may take a few days to procure or prepare and I would like to have them ready for you."

[124] "I'll tell you what I would like and you tell me what you would like me to send you from Canada—and no holds barred." I said to him.

"Fair enough! We'll tell each other frankly what we want."

"Agreed," I joyfuly replied.

126 I always carry a notebook with me. It's a small folding affair made of leatherette or something, that has room for 3 or 4 ball point pens and a pad inside. I was making notes as well as marking down the things the Mir expressed interest in when I spoke of the conveniences available in America. I intended to send these to him anyway.

I had seen quite a few little items around Hunza that I would have liked to have . . . for instance, a Hunzan hat, a cane made in Hunza, a pair of Hunzan boots. The boots are most unusual, being something
291 like the mukluks used in the north by the Eskimos, ex-
237 cept that these are made in a simpler manner. They are somewhat like riding boots in shape except they are

made entirely of soft pliable leather, the lower part, 291
including the soles, from yak hide and the upper part 237
from cow or ibex hide.

I wanted to learn as much as possible about the 121
good people of Hunza. Therefore I was interested in
their crafts and craftsmanship.

All of the cloth used in making the garments the 286
people wear and the special Hunzan hats are woven 291
on looms that have been in use for hundreds of years.
They weave 3 distinct types of material. It takes
about 3 days to weave a length of approximately 15
yards of the best cloth, which is hardly sufficient to
make a man's and a woman's "choga." The woman's
requires 7 yards and the man's takes 9 yards. They [437]
trade commodities in exchange for the weaving. Then, 294
during the winter, the men of the households cut and 462
stitch the garments into durable, warm clothing.

The village blacksmith is also the music maker. 326
Somehow, to me, that seems most appropriate for the 533
clang of the hammer on the anvil rings a true music. 563
These blacksmiths and musicians live in a section entirely of their own and they seem to keep mostly to
themselves. It seems that all of the blacksmith-musicians of Hunza belong to a tribe known as the Bericho.

These people were sent to Hunza long, long ago by [173]
the Prince of Baltistan who was repaying a favor rendered him by the Mir of Hunza. These people have retained their independence and identity and do not generally take part in Hunzan activities. They even speak [197]
a language of their own known as Dumaki. This is also
referred to as the speech of the Doma, or Bericho, of
Hunza.

These people dwell in a quaint village or a com- [621]
munity entirely of their own located just below Baltit.
The history, the behavior and the manners and occupa-

326 533 563 tion of these unusual people stirred up an interest within me, and I wanted to know more about them. I found very little data could be obtained from any of the books I had been able to read on the subject.

[173] But after much discourse and questioning, I learned what I had begun to suspect . . . that the Bericho were actually gypsies who had come to India more than 2,000 years ago. From India, as good gypsies would do, they fanned out to spread themselves in small groups over the entire country . . . some ultimately settling in Baltistan, from whence a colony were sent off to Hunza.

Their place of abode is actually a village known as Berishal. It is a known fact that the people of Hunza depend entirely upon the Bericho for their iron-mongering and their tool-smithing and their music-making.

I was very happy to have unearthed this information so I can pass it along to my readers.

[871] [167] These Berichos used to send their children out of Hunza to be educated and the Mir told me that he had to put a stop to this practice . . . not because he objected to the children of the Bericho being educated, but because the children did not return or remain with the trade of their parents. As the Mir's country needed artisans of this type, he had to put a stop to their sending their children elsewhere for education.

[414] The Mir went on to tell me how important these Berichos were to the community. They fashioned farm implements as well as hardware like hinges, latches, razors and many other essential farm and household necessities that are fashioned from metal. Besides making the implements of peace, the blacksmith could also fashion a shotgun barrel.

[651] He further mentioned that each household in the community pays a small tithe as a contribution to-

wards the maintenance of the Berichos and they travel 326
about the villages mending and repairing items requiring 533
attention, and, of course, providing music and 563
entertainment wherever it is required. I guess they
could be compared to the traveling tinkers of Ireland. [651]

The Bericho blacksmith shop contained all the accoutrements 325
found in the blacksmith shops of America. There was a pit in which charcoal was laid and kept alive and glowing by a pair of goatskin bellows . . . the customer usually wielded the bellows while his implement was being manufactured or repaired. There were many necessary tools—hammers of various sizes and tongs and, of course, a large chunk of some old machine that served as an anvil.

Then there was the goldsmith. He didn't fashion 326
much out of gold any more because there wasn't much 316
gold. Some time ago there was a quantity of gold 135
washed from the Chalt and Hunza Rivers. This was done at times when the rivers had receded to a low ebb and then the sand left on what was the river bottom a few weeks or months previous was washed for signs of gold. The people who collected or panned or mined this gold were called "marooh."

This Hunzan goldsmith also made silver trinkets, 306
rings, bracelets, medallions, pendants, ear rings, 301
broaches and other articles of the craft. What's more, [135]
they were set with attractive colored stones, for the mountains around Hunza abound with many beautiful and valuable stones. As the women of Hunza do love and wear jewelry, the goldsmith was kept quite busy.

Yes, there was a wood turner in the area, too. 322
Whether or not his craft has improved since the advent 177
of John Clark, the American engineer who set up a wood carving school with his headquarters in the old Baltit Fort, I am unable to say. But from the work

322 [177] that I have seen performed, I am not too sure that our wood workers could teach them any new tricks. The thing they're short of is suitable wood.

[415] [352] One of the important functions of the wood turner is to fashion bowls which are made out of either mulberry, willow or apricot wood. The wood turner also makes charpoys, chests, jewel boxes, bowls and chairs and I believe he is capable of making anything that can be fashioned out of wood.

461 One definite thing impressed me about these various craftsmen and that was the fact that time was meaningless. Their craft was the important thing. Whatever had to be done had to be done right whether it required an hour or a day or a week.

461 126 There were many things that I would have liked to purchase or arrange for but some of them would require days to produce and it was not my desire to hurry anybody. After seeing their pleasant way of life, I had no intention of disturbing it. Whatever was available that I wanted, I would take with me. Anything else could be sent on or else I would do without it.

CHAPTER 30

Who Are the Hunzans?

I HAVE HEARD the people of Hunza referred to as Hunzans, Hunzukuts, Hunzawals and Hunzas. They prefer to be called Hunzukuts. 101

However, in my writing I am referring to them as Hunzans. I do this strictly as a matter of simplification. I find it easy to say and easy to remember and I also believe it to be the most phonetical of all the terms given.

The Mir claims that the rulers of Hunza were and are direct descendants of Alexander the Great. I could find no proof to either confirm or refute this statement. But it is generally believed that not only the Mir, but the people of Hunza are descendants of Alexander or his soldiers. 643 173

It has been related by many writers that the Hunzans are not by appearance an Asian people. To that I will subscribe completely. They are definitely, in 144

144 countenance and color, not Indian but European.

If you took the first ten Hunzans that you met anywhere and put them in Europe, no one could doubt that they were Europeans. With the exception of a few clearly and unmistakably Chinese-appearing Hunzans, practically each one would pass as a European. It is understandable that a bit of Mongolian blood got mixed in because Hunza is right smack on the Chinese border.

181 The people of this country are unqualifiedly the
173 most energetic and industrious of all the people I came across in the East, which lends credence to the fact that they are of European origin.

173 Even before I went to Hunza I read carefully Ar-
643 rian's *Life of Alexander the Great*. After seeing Hunza and being impressed by the conviction that the people
174 of Hunza did appear to be Europeans, I came back and made a further search through the *Life of Alexander the Great*.

It is an historical fact that Alexander took unto himself a wife when he was on his Indian campaign. He married Roxana, the daughter of Oxyartes who was king of Bactria. Bactria is in the northern part of Afghanistan—right smack against the Hunzan border.

Alexander had a posthumous son with Roxana. His name was Alexander Aegus.

So the Mir's claim might have sound historical basis. The Hunzans claim to trace their history back about 2,000 years. Well, Alexander married Roxana back in 327 B. C. So you see, the story may have its point.

I'll further state that the Mir himself looked exactly like one would expect a Mediterranean European to look. He might feign a relationship or descendancy from Alexander the Great, but he couldn't feign that Macedonian appearance.

History also relates most pointedly that Alexander 173
had difficulty with his troops at various points in India 174
where they refused to go any further. Then in Taxila, which is not very far from Rawalpindi on the route to Hunza, he left the sick, disabled and older men. It wouldn't be difficult to imagine that some of the younger wounded men, when they got well, crossed the Himalayas through the Babusar Pass and then wandered up to Gilgit and Hunza or when they were in Bactria, it would have been quite an easy matter—in fact, it was just a matter of walking a few miles through the mountains—to reach the Hunza River.

It is not in my interest to strengthen the Mir's story or the tales that other writers have established about the relationship of Alexander or his men and the people of Hunza. I am merely citing the above from my actual observations and studies. You can accept it or waive it aside.

One would not have a comprehensive understanding 175
of Hunza and the people of Hunza without a few facts 643
about their comparatively early history.

One of the most colorful leaders that the people of Hunza have ever had was the present Mir's grandfather—Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, K.C.I.E. (Knight Commander of the Indian Empire)—who was the Mir of Hunza from 1892 until 1938 when he died on July 23 at the age of 79, having ruled for a total of 46 years. 'Twas a long rule for any king in any country.

In 1934 when he was 75 years of age his wife gave birth to a son who was named Sahib Khan. In January, 1938 the British crown conferred the title of K.C.S.I. (Knight Commander of the Star of India) upon Sir Mohomed.

He was followed by his son, Ghazan Khan who ruled from 1938 to 1945—not quite 8 years. Ghazan Khan

175 643 was then succeeded by his son, the present ruler—Mohammed Jamal Khan who has been the ruler of Hunza since 1945.

175 643 669 Here is a quotation from the Mir's grandfather's book in which he tells about the blood-curdling exploits of his brother, Sfdar Ali, whom he succeeded:

"He thereupon had Taighoon, Nematulla and Misiab killed, Sakhawat Shah and Jahandar Shah rolled down a precipice below Ghulkin, their mother put to death and arranged for the murder of Salam Khan in Shimshal."

However, he spared the life of his brother, Nazim Khan and then he wrote to the Maharajah of Kashmir to announce his ascension to the throne in the following descriptive terms:

"By the will of Allah and a decree of fate, my late father and I recently fell out. I took the initiative and settled the matter, and have placed myself on the throne of my ancestors."

This bloodthirsty Mir virtually got away with mass murder and felt that he was cock of the walk and could afford to defy any power.

175 648 From my reading of the Mir's grandfather's autobiography, from studies made from the earlier books written about Hunza and from my observations and discussions on the spot, I have evolved a personal kind of understanding concerning the situation that prevails in Hunza today.

[771] The Mir of Hunza, as well as the other rulers of the principalities in that area, such as Nagir, Punial, Yasin, Baltistan and others, are all Mohammedan and, from what I can gather, they supported or were willing participants in the revolt which tied them together with the central government in Pakistan. This government, bear in mind, is strictly Mohammedan and partition

175
from India was on this religious basis. 648

However, records clearly indicate that Hunza had
for many years enjoyed a pleasant relationship and 175
trade with her Chinese neighbors through the Province 648
of Singkiang. History shows that for ages the caravans 439
moved continually from Kashgar, Urumchi and Yar- [487]
kand down through Hunza and on to Gilgit, Peshawar,
Afghanistan, Persia and further westward.

Hunza in those days used a lot of rice, which came [262]
from China. Wheat has practically completely replaced
rice.

If this gives rise to the impression that Hunza was not as self-sufficient as you imagined, I am sorry, but I am dealing with facts and not myths . . . unless they are so identified. I don't believe nor does data prove that, while caravans moved from Turkestan through Hunza, there was any great trade or barter between the people of Hunza and Turkestan.

But because of the regular movement of these cara- 175
vans across Hunza territory, it is easy to comprehend 648
that most of the things the Hunzans would use and [177]
require would come from China and there would be
a strong Chinese or Turkic influence in the area. Upon
checking closely into the records and history, I found
that the Chinese district bordering Hunza was also prin-
cipally Mohammedan in religion as are most of the
Turkic peoples. Mir Nazim Khan states clearly in his [643]
autobiography that the Mir of Hunza had possession [423]
of vast acreages in China along the Yarkand River, on [233]
which roamed herds of yaks and other domestic beasts.
(It wasn't China then as they had not yet claimed it.)

The Mirs of Hunza have for many years—in fact, from time immemorial—paid tribute to the Chinese government at Kashgar. From the records that I have been able to find, they paid tribute to Kashgar long

175 648 before the Chinese government took control of that region. (By that I mean, while it was still in the hands of what is known as the Turki.)

This quotation from the autobiography of Nazim Khan will serve to illustrate the point in question:

"Two years later Colonel Bruce came to Gilgit as temporary British Agent and he told me that the Government had decided that I might still pay my annual tribute to China. To this, however, I demurred as I pointed out to him that having relations with both was like sitting between two stools. He, however, retorted that if this was the case and one stool broke there was always the other to sit on and that no suspicion would attach to me as long as there were friendly relations between the British Government and the Emperor of China. He did make one stipulation, though, and that was that I should let the Political Agent in Gilgit see the letter that accompanied the toll, before it was despatched."

In turn, the Chinese sent a friendly troop of soldiers to Hunza every year with gifts for the Mir and rich, luxurious gifts they were!

175 648 487 Now this may sound very strange, almost ridiculous but nevertheless, it is absolutely true. And the reason is simple and easy to understand if you will but follow me. The road through Hunza was by far the shortest route to Gilgit, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Kabul and Persia as well as Srinagar in Kashmir and other parts of India. Elsewhere along the route the caravans could travel with immunity and safety but in Hunza even the largest caravan—yes, even one protected by gun bearers or soldiers—could easily come to grief. All that would be required would be a few men hidden away in the upper reaches on the slopes to begin dropping stones or to start a landslide at a given moment.

As that entire 200 miles from the Chinese border to 175
Nomal is composed chiefly of this type of terrain, un- 648
less a caravan had a guarantee of safe conduct, they [487]
just couldn't get through.

The Mir was the ruler of Hunza and he held full and [643]
complete control over his tribesmen. So what could
be more natural and understandable than an annual
payment of tribute to the Mir for safe conduct? I know [487]
for a fact that right up until the time when the Chinese Communists took over the Singkiang District, the Mir still received a share of the cargo carried by the caravans traveling through Hunza.

Therefore it is my conclusion that the ways, the habits 175
and the mode of life of the people of Hunza were pat- 648
terned more after the Chinese than the Indians. 439
Further, I suspect that they did a lot more trading with [177]
the caravans that came through regularly than they ever did at Gilgit. In one instance the caravans came to them and in the other case they had to go down to Gilgit . . . anywhere from 40 to 200 or so miles away, through the tough mountain roads.

It was in November 1947, when Pakistan seized part 175
of Kashmir from India by an armed revolt. The cir- 648
cumstances that brought about this event are worth recording and I believe you will have greater understanding of the people of Hunza and Pakistan if you know the story.

The Pakistanis claim that the Province of Kashmir should belong to Pakistan because the Indian government had agreed to allow all the predominantly Moslem districts to secede and become a part of the newly formed country of Pakistan. Therefore, Kashmir which is more than 90 per cent Moslem should be a part of the Mohammedan nation. Eventually, when partition took place, Kashmir was not permitted out of the fold

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648 of India but was held in abeyance by her, not belonging to one or the other, yet under Indian control.

But in October of 1947, when the Maharajah of Kashmir who was Mohammedan suddenly decided to accede to the side of India because of pressure, threats or promises, word got down to Gilgit and there a few bold, Mohammedan officers and members of the Gilgit Scouts acted. They first approached two British officers who were still in the employ of the government . . . these officers obviously sympathized with their views.

Immediately these officers cut all communications by slicing the telegraph and telephone wires and placed the Governor of Gilgit, who was the Maharajah of Kashmir's representative, along with his few Hindu followers, under arrest.

The Indian government retaliated by bombing Gilgit. The P.A.'s house was hit by one of the bombs but only a small amount of damage was inflicted.

So since that day in November, 1947 the Gilgit area, including Hunza, Baltistan and other parts that were once part of the former Kashmir Province, is now part of Pakistan and forms the Gilgit Agency.

Considering the many casualties that occurred in other parts of Pakistan and India, the Gilgit episode is one that those in charge can be proud of because there were few if any casualties and the entire area seems to be happy under Pakistan authority.

648 Since 1947 the influence in Hunza has been mainly Pakistani. Whether the people of Hunza like it that way or not, I could not ascertain. I did not ask the Mir his opinion. To the best of my knowledge and belief, he is cooperating to the highest degree with the central government in Pakistan.

Actually, from the way the people of Hunza live, I cannot see what difference it would make to them whether they were a part of the British Empire, India or Pakistan, or if they were independent. They receive little or nothing from the outside world and contribute little or nothing in return. They are content to leave the world alone if the world will but leave them alone. The law of "live and let live" seems to be the "Golden Rule" in Hunza. If only more peoples and nations throughout the world would follow this simple principle! 648

Why have the people of this tiny principality so fascinated the world? That is a question that I have sought to answer. 114

I believe it was Mrs. Lorimer's book *Language Hunting in the Karakorams* that first brought Hunza to the attention of many parts of the world. Then, too, Robert McCarrison mentioned the health of these people in his research writings. Other writers followed. J. I. Rodale in *The Healthy Hunzas* did a lot to focus attention on the people of Hunza. Then G. T. Wrench, Barbara Mons, Frank and Jean Shore, John Clark, Lowell Thomas, Jr., Owen Williams, Ian Stephens, Peter Fleming, Irene V. Unruh, Ben Ruhe and Dr. Allen Banik.

Here I would like to devote a few lines to the work of the above mentioned authors.

I still believe that the most accurate and detailed information about Hunza was given by Mrs. Lorimer.

Barbara Mons in her book *High Road to Hunza* gives a splendid account of the people. The only serious thing I found wrong with it was that there wasn't enough . . . her book left me hungry, eager and yearning for more information about these delightful people. I rank her work as the most concise, informative, pleasurable book on Hunza.

John Clark in his book *Hunza—The Lost Kingdom of the Himalayas* devoted himself chiefly to his wood carving project and left little or no time to say, examine or do anything about the important happenings in Hunza.

When Lowell Thomas, Jr., and his party were in Hunza, they were too busy with the excitement and work involved in filming the scenes for Cinerama to learn much about the country and its people.

In the *National Geographic* of January, 1960 appears the story by Tay and Lowell Thomas, Jr. Part of this story deals with their visit to Hunza. However, the *National Geographic* takes pains not to mention the date of the trip to Hunza, which was December, 1954.

Frankly, I never believed that a magazine of the repute or supposed repute of the *National Geographic* magazine would stoop to that level—to publish an article about 5 years old and allow its readers to assume that it was of recent vintage. I guess the *National Geographic* must have been hard up for an interesting Asiatic story, so it dug up that old one of the Thomases.

A very good book that dwells here and there on Hunza in passages and references is one by an Englishman by the name of Ian Stephens. His book is called *The Horned Moon*. It is well written and this man does know the people of India and Pakistan . . . having been a leading correspondent and executive of one of the English newspapers in that country for many years.

Irene V. Unruh was a German doctor who spent considerable time in Hunza. Her observations concerning the health of the people are most enlightening. She attributes their good health to their unsophisticated, simple way of life and also suggests that the glacial water they consume plays an important role.

Owen Williams, who wrote *First Over the Roof of the World,* was one of the first Americans to see Hunza, although he spent very little time there. He just passed through. Hunza happened to be on the itinerary of the expedition of which he was a member.

Ben Ruhe, a young newspaperman from Allentown, Pennsylvania, spent some time in Hunza and Nagir and his account, published in his home town newspaper (and elsewhere) represents some of the best written and presented facts, tales and fables about the people of this part of the world that I have read anywhere and it's a pity that Mr. Ruhe didn't do a book. Perhaps there is still time.

And last, there is Dr. Allen Banik's book, *Hunza Land.* Dr. Banik was sponsored by Art Linkletter to go to Hunza and he found a great many obstacles blocking his path but eventually, when he did get into Hunza, he unfortunately spent but a short time there and his observations do not correspond very closely with my own. But I salute his inalienable right to differ! Dr. Banik, a genial pleasant man, ready and willing to help anyone, has been busy addressing meetings and making appearances throughout the United States and from the reports that I have read, he seems to be pleasing his audiences.

Peter Fleming's book *News from Tartary,* while it is to be regretted that he devotes a scant 15 pages to Hunza, is probably one of the best pieces of writing on the country, the scenery and the people that you will encounter—no matter where you search. Also, his findings are pinpointed. Peter Fleming had a keen eye, a sharp mind, an understanding far beyond his years when he wrote *News from Tartary.* The references, written 25 years ago, are as sharp and as clearly in focus as if written today. I compliment Mr. Fleming

114 on a remarkable piece of reporting!

A splendid bit of writing about Hunza appears in the book called *After You, Marco Polo* by Jean Shore. Mrs. Shore is a remarkable traveler, a wide-eyed, eager observer and a writer with a fine sense of humor. Although only 36 pages of her book are devoted to Hunza, they are "must" reading for anyone who wants to have a clear picture of the Mir, the Rani and the ways of life and the people. Oh, yes, and her description of the country is a delight.

114 Now I must deal with two books that deal princi-
164 pally with the health of the people of Hunza. They are written by G. T. Wrench in 1938 and J. I. Rodale in 1948. If the health of the Hunzans is a myth, then these two gentlemen helped spread or perpetuate the myth. However, here is evidence that should dispel any thought of fancy.

Sir Robert McCarrison, C.I.E., M.A., M.D., D. Sc., L.L.D., F.R.C.P., B.A.O., spent the years 1902-4 as regimental medical officer in Chitral and 1904-11 as the Gilgit Agency surgeon. In that important office he had a splendid opportunity to study the health of the inhabitants of that area. Hunza is a part of the Gilgit Agency.

Dr. McCarrison reports: "During the period of my association with these people I never saw a case of asthenic dyspepsia, of gastric or duodenal ulcer, of appendicitis, of mucus colitis, of cancer. . . . Among these people the abdomen oversensitive to nerve impressions, to fatigue, anxiety, or cold was unknown. Indeed their buoyant abdominal health has, since my return to the West, provided a remarkable contrast with the dyspeptic and colonic lamentations of our highly civilized communities."

This lends credence to the outlines and hypothesis concerning the health of the Hunzans. I have found the observations made by both authors, J. I. Rodale and G. T. Wrench, to be both authentic and comparatively reliable when it is taken into consideration that their work was done in the early years when not much information was available from Hunzaland. They were pioneers in the field to show the people of the world that there was a simple, natural, organic way to health. 114 164

Can anyone doubt that Hunza is located in one of the most inaccessible parts of the entire universe? The fact that a people—a handsome, virile, intelligent, civilized people—could live in such an inaccessible part of the world and still be considered among the healthiest of all people on the face of the globe is intriguing, to say the least. 131 164

Perhaps the story of their health, longevity and energy so shocked our concepts that we had to look twice or read twice to make sure that the statements we were reading could be accepted. Probably because of our smugness—with the feeling of security because of our modern medicines, our miracle drugs, our hospitals, our research techniques, our lab equipment and such—it was incomprehensible to us that a people so remotely located without all of these tremendous benefits could even exist, let alone be considered to be the healthiest and longest living people in the world.

Was it our disdain of eastern methods and way of life that rattled our concepts? 164

Now it could be that the dreamers among us had our imagination fired like it has never been fired before . . . to think that a people living truly on the roof of the world without benefits of modern civilization could subsist or exist, let alone be healthy!

But as one investigates, he finds that Hunza is one of the few places in the entire world, where there is a [177]

164 people who retained their character, independence,
177 freedom and primitive way of life. It is my belief that they are not much further advanced today than they were more than 2,000 years ago. Fearing that you may think I mean this in a derogatory manner, I would hurry and add that their way of life 2,000 years ago obviously was as good in many ways, or better, than our way of life today. But that is a measure for individual acceptance.

131 They owe their strength, their health, their longevity, their happiness to that wall of mountains that surrounds them and keeps out all but the boldest and most venturesome of invaders or travelers. They are surrounded by the most massive, the hugest, the greatest accumulation of mountain grandeur and awesomeness to be found anywhere on the world's surface. With such impenetrable guardians, it is not too difficult to understand the reason for their comparative privacy.

From what I saw and gathered, I found that one would not have to go many miles from any given point in Hunza to reach a location where no human being's foot had ever trod before. Should you have the desire to do just that, you can find millions of acres that have not felt the imprint of man within a few miles from most any given spot in Hunza.

181 Living in comparative isolation has made these people courageous and fearless. They are not stooges of civilization and all its implications. There, in Hunza, a man's individuality is still a characteristic trait to which they cling.

177 Now comes the big question—one that hundreds of people have already asked me . . . people who have but a faint knowledge or have heard a bit of news about Hunza and have been interested and fascinated by the myths and fables circulated about her—can Hunza

survive despite the encroachment of modern civiliza- 177
tion?

I go on record as saying, "Yes, she can survive but it will take good leadership, and the present ruling Mir—my friend, Mohammed Jamal Khan—is capable of this leadership, provided he is not interfered with by the powers that surround him or emanate from Karachi!"

The first detrimental factor that is crawling into 177
Hunza at the present time, and has been for some 263
years, is salt. Already numerous cases of goiter have 164
appeared which did not exist before when they used
their native salt.

Travel in Hunza is restricted. In fact, at the present 486
time no foreigner is allowed into the state without a 648
permit and that includes Pakistanis as well. As far as 123
I know, my friend Cec Brunton and I were the last
foreigners to enter Hunza. With the political situation as it is today, I doubt if anyone else will be permitted to enter the country until the situation changes.

The fact that China is at the present time encroach- 648
ing upon India is a rather significant factor. I really can't appraise its implications because the disputed area by any calculation seems to be of little or no value. There are millions of such acres available throughout Tibet and the Himalayan cordillera as well as in the Karakorums. Therefore it must be just for aggrandizement that China is moving. If that is her aim and desire, then Hunza would be right up her alley.

Yet it is my firm belief that China will not bother Hunza. I know the Afghans have looked with longing eyes on that part of Pakistan for some years, but they have neither the arms nor the men to successfully invade the area, although with arms from Russia and a little prodding, things could get hot in that area. How-

648 ever, such a move, in my humble opinion, would be most ill-advised because the Pakistan government has splendid leadership, a good army and a mighty impregnable position in Gilgit. Undoubtedly Gilgit is the most accessible point in that entire area and Gilgit which belongs to Pakistan, is most capably staffed, manned and led.

177 [164] [167] Even as I write my tale, changes are occurring in Hunza. In a letter received from the doctor just before my book went to press, he told me that many diseases unknown in Hunza before are making their appearance—primarily because they are brought back by native Hunzans who go out to serve in the army or work in other parts of Pakistan and the area.

[161] The population of Hunza is as great now as its land can foster and sustain. There is no reason to believe that the birth rate in Hunza will decrease and that means that more and more of the people of Hunza will have to seek a livelihood elsewhere. But they will keep returning and bringing with them the benefits of civilization. That, in my opinion, will be the undoing of that little paradise on earth.

Being blessed with the earth's most fabulous mountain scenery may also be the cause of Hunza's undoing. I've noticed that exploration parties and mountain climbers have been congregating in that area more and more. British, Swiss, German, Italian and Austrian expeditions have been in or are planning to go into the Karakorums to scale those hundred peaks over 20,000 feet high.

The magnetism of unscaled impregnable mountain summits becomes overpowering to many men. Why bother with the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Rockies or the Andes, when the Himalayas, the Karakorums and the Hindu Kush offer a much more taunting challenge?

And fortunately or unfortunately, little Hunza lies right in the center. /77

These expeditions often consist of 100 men or more. They bring with them huge supplies of western food and commodities. Besides, their pockets are usually bulging with foreign currency. I fear that these will combine to eventually destroy Hunza.

Sad as I am to think that this will happen, I am nevertheless happy that I was there to see it while it was still "Shangri-la."

CHAPTER 31

Breakfast Chitchat

122 THE MIR was a most tolerant and understanding host.
574 I can't say for sure whether or not all his guests were treated as well as I, but I have no reason to believe otherwise.

Sometimes I would get down to breakfast alone at 8 o'clock in the morning. On other occasions there was Jahangir, sometimes Cec and on some occasions the doctor and the Mir's uncle and a few other individuals. I usually tried to get down at 8 o'clock . . . yet, there were occasions when I got down at 6 o'clock, if I had some adventure or specific project in view.

353 I remember this specific breakfast because the first
792 thing I said to the Mir after I was seated at the table was, "I would judge that you were very fond of the Aga Khan."

You see, it wasn't very hard for me to judge this fact because our apartment was hung with pictures

of the Aga Khan and his wife in various poses and 353
stages of his life. I had given some study to these photographs 792
and many of them were inscribed in the hand
of the Aga Khan with endearing terms to his friend,
Jamal.

Our quarters were in the guest house—actually adjoining 122
the palace but on a higher level. This building 344
had been erected by the Mir's grandfather back in 644
1925. It was a well-built, handsome structure, firmly
ensconced on a high rocky ledge of granite.

You walked down the Mir's long staircase from the
sun room, then you walked up half a dozen or more
stone steps, forward a few feet and then you climbed up
a circular, enclosed wooden staircase to the guest quarters.
These consisted of a large, comfortable sitting [352]
room with many easy chairs and a fine writing desk,
a large bedroom with two comfortable beds and further
on was the bathroom. Then to the right of the lovely
sitting room was a balcony—spacious and inviting.
From it you could view Rakaposhi and all its splendor
and gorgeous loveliness.

1 The furniture all round was similar to that which [352]
you would find in the average better-class American
homes. Photographs adorned the walls, among which [353]
were the photos of the old Aga Khan and his French [792]
wife.

When I mentioned the Aga Khan to the Mir, he 792
waxed eloquent and his face beamed and he said, "Not
only was I fond of him—not only did I love him—but
we were close intimate friends. He was the most generous
of men and especially to the people of Hunza. I
revere his memory! He was a wonderful person. We
really miss him since his passing. His ancestors came
from Persia to India in 1834. In 1934, one hundred [871]
years later, to celebrate the jubilee of the founding of

792 his ancestors' dynasty in India, he donated what is now
871 the Hunzan school system. The fact that the children of Hunza are given a good education, without any cost to them, is due entirely to the kindness and benevolence of that great man. He started and maintained the system and I trust that his son will continue in his father's footsteps."

That the school system of Hunza is working, I can attest.

792 From what I have been able to gather and learn, Hunza was one of the states of India that contributed to the coffers of the Aga Khan. There is some story, true or mythical, that each year all of his religious followers throughout the world gave him a gift of gold or platinum to the extent of his weight. Now I do know
[316] that some gold was mined in Hunza and probably that, too, was sent to the Aga Khan or added to the sum or weight sent from all of the countries and the millions of his followers to be his gift but, as far as I know, at the present time there is not much gold being mined in Hunza and nowhere did I see any sign of anything that could be used as a means of export to bring money into Hunza.

124 In the meantime I was enjoying my breakfast and between munching mouthfuls of food, I was asking the Mir some rather important questions.

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681 "I read somewhere some time ago, that the revenues you obtain from the fines you levy upon people in Hunza who commit misdemeanors or break rules or laws are added to the coffers of your own estate."

The Mir thought this was a great joke and laughed heartily.

"To begin with," he said, "laws are seldom broken by my people. They are good people and they live peaceably and do not commit serious offenses. During

the past year the total collected from fines imposed by 651
me upon the citizens of Hunza totaled less than 200 681
rupees. You know that my people do not have much
money. There is no way or means of earning money— [436]
except by the few. We do not require money in order
to live in Hunza. Further, the full amount that was [653
collected in this manner was used in the maintenance 312]
of the irrigation system."

I waved my hand and said, "I only asked. I didn't 000
think it was true, but I've read so many tales about Hunza in which ridiculous and fantastic statements are made without any justification or background."

"A few years ago," I went on, "two of the most in- 114
fluential and widely circulated magazines in the United 585
States published an article by a famed and capable couple of writers—man and wife. I know they visited Hunza on two occasions because I saw their names in your guest book. Now the story they told and which both of these magazines published stated that it was a custom in Hunza for the mother-in-law to go and live with a newly married couple and remain with them on their honeymoon to teach them the ways of life. You explained that this was the reason why Hunzan marriages were so successful and there was seldom, if ever, a divorce.

"Before asking you to clarify this, I just want to tell you that I read this story and when I came to this specific part, I could hardly believe my eyes. But, as I have learned, there are many strange customs followed by different people throughout the world and of course, this could be absolutely true. But it certainly is strange and weird sounding to me anyway. So tell me, is that story true? Is it the custom of the people of Hunza to have the mother-in-law stay with the newly married couple during their honeymoon?"

114 585 "I said it as a joke," replied the Mir. "I had no knowledge that it would be so widely publicized and written and taken as a fact. I did not mean to mislead the writers you mentioned."

"Then it is not true!"

"No," replied the Mir, "I meant it only as a joke!"

643 115 522 There was no doubt in my mind that the Mir had a keen sense of humor. In fact, through all my talks and discussions with the Mir which were frequent, there was seldom a time when he would pass by an opportunity for a bit of witticism or to laugh and have a bit of fun. He was just about as pleasant a man as could be found anywhere. He was not only a great ruler but he had a sense of humor. It was too bad that the writers referred to took him seriously. Maybe it was one of their bad days.

249 "Do you grow poppies here?" I asked the Mir bluntly and more or less out of the clear blue sky. I put this question to the Mir for a most definite reason.

On a few occasions I saw what I believed to be a field of flowers waving in the distance. But I wasn't sure. Invariably these patches of color were a mile or many miles away. I wondered what they were but I never could get close enough to see them. They were always sighted at great distance from where the road lay.

[123] You might ask why I didn't definitely, once and for all, set out across the field and find out. But remember, when you're in a more or less strange unusual territory, you just don't go off across the fields into someone else's private property.

All told, I doubt if I saw more than half a dozen of these patches of color during the full length of my travels. There might have been many more but I certainly didn't see them and I have an idea that if they were there, they would have been noticed. 249

It is also possible that from a distance of one or two miles, one might confuse a field of alfalfa hay or barley or wheat and, with golden heads when ripe and the sun's rays striking them, what was grain might resemble flowers, but I think I am well enough versed in plant lore to be able to make the distinction.

I want my readers to bear in mind also that most of my traveling from Gilgit to Baltit was done on Nagir territory.

The reason these bits of color were most conspicuous was obviously because of the practically total absence of anything that resembled flowers—or a bit of brightness.

The Mir answered my question about the growing 249
of poppies as follows, "Yes, some of our farmers are 276
growing poppies but I am going to put a stop to it." 656

I waited for him to continue with keen interest.

"It appears," he went on, "that some of the people have begun to take to smoking opium . . . and fearing this insidious bad habit will take root, I'm going to ban the growing of this plant."

I did not mention it to him then or since, but somehow I had overheard (perhaps at one of the parties in Gilgit where a group of the roundabout notables had gathered) that opium had been drifting in from some locations and commanding fairly good prices. It also struck me that the Chinese border, being close at hand, might prove to be a very appropriate market for the produce that they would get from the poppy plants.

I did not ask if there were any restrictions against the producing of opium, apart from the fact that the Mir was going to ban it for protection of his people. I do not know whether anyone could prevent the Hunzans or the Nagirwals from growing these colorful plants.

249 plants. Of one thing I was sure and that was that they weren't growing them for the beauty of the flowers.

Now in my strolls and walks about Hunza, I didn't get very far above Altit. Who knows? Maybe a large quantity of poppies are grown further along the river. But actually I doubt it very much.

124 Breakfast was now completed. I was eating alone, of course, in this instance. The Mir and Rani were just keeping me company. I thanked the Rani for her kindness, bowed to her and took my leave with the Mir.

CHAPTER 32

We Meet and Ride the Yaks

I BELIEVE that every human being has a favorite animal. It is generally accepted that many people like dogs, others like cats, some prefer horses. At this moment I am thinking about other beasts—let us say, the more or less rare or strange beasts. Some people are thrilled at the sight of a lion or tiger and others, a giraffe. 000

When I was a youngster I was always fascinated by a buffalo. Probably it was because I had read many stories about the adventures and derring-do of Buffalo Bill. But for many years now the yak has somehow intrigued me. Somewhere along the line I had made up my mind that this was the most useful animal on the face of the earth. It is conceded that practically every animal has its uses and fills a place in the natural scheme of things. But to me, a yak embodied all of the wonderful features of the most useful and most

000 needed animals in the world.

231 It is clearly and distinctly established that Tibet, for example, could never exist and people could never live in that part of the world if it weren't for the yaks and yaks are native only to that part of the world —yes, wild ones, I mean. That's where they were originally found and tamed. They still roam wild on some of the higher inaccessible elevations and plateaus in that part of the globe.

No one will attempt to deny that our cow is a most useful and practically essential animal. It gives milk from which we make butter, cheese and cream. We use the carcass for meat and the hide for shoes, baseballs and many other articles but, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the cow as it is today actually couldn't look after herself in the northern latitudes and pasture food must be provided.

[492] Well, the yak does everything a cow does. Besides that, it is one of the finest beasts of burden. Then, too, it is the surest-footed animal to be found anywhere. It can, and often does, forage for its own food. It can live off practically nothing. It is suspected that it can find sustenance in a bit of grass or roots or even a bit of coarse, uninviting (to any other animal) herbage.

[492] Like our cow, it takes to domestication readily. Both
[241] the Tibetans and the Hunzans use them to work their
fields and flail their wheat, barley and other grains.
231 From the wool on its back, belly and head comes the
237 toughest of woven fabrics, from which is made the
[283] sturdiest of clothes for the people and tents for their
homes. Wherever you see rope in Hunza, you can be
sure that it was made from braided or woven yak hair.
[291] The hide is used for most everything . . . boots and
[415] shoes, of course, and water containers and skin boats,
which are the means and mode of transportation across
[501] and up and down the dangerous rivers

and up and down the dangerous rivers. Yes, even the 231
yak bones and horns are never wasted. Picks are fash- 237
ioned from them. They even find their way into the [342]
walls of the homes of the people of Hunza, for they
are lighter than stones.

Still I haven't yet mentioned what is generally ac- 231
cepted as the yak's most important contribution to the 262
lives of the people in the highest mountain ranges in the world . . . and that is from the little green herbage they get, they give a good quantity of rich milk, from which is made the famous yak butter. Then last and perhaps even most important, it is butchered for its good quality, health-sustaining meat.

Even the yak tails are useful . . . as brooms or dusters 231
. . . and many are shipped to the Western world and 237
used as Santa Claus beards. And they do make the 412
best Santa Claus beards of all. I know—I have a 439
couple!

Now after you have had a chance to read these 000
qualifications, perhaps you, too, will share my admiration and appreciation of the world's most useful animal.

I was up bright and early the morning I was to go to meet the yaks. Yes, it was just 6 o'clock when I was walking down the enclosed staircase towards the Mir's palace—leaving Cecil asleep, as he still had to remain in bed as the doctor had advised.

I met Jahangir coming from the other guest house and he joined me. We had agreed the previous night to be up at 6 but I never expected that it would work out right on the beam, as it happened in this instance.

So down we went along the stone staircases from one garden level to another until we reached the Mir's palace and then we began to climb up the long wooden staircase again.

As usual, the Mir was there to welcome us, along

000 with the Rani and his brother and, after the usual sumptuous breakfast, Sultan Ali joined us and the three of us—Jahangir, Sultan Ali and I—took off to Altit. As we left the Mir said, "I'll be waiting here for you and you'll ride the yaks right into the palace yard."

"You'll find the yaks very easy and comfortable to ride," continued the Mir. "What's more—you won't notice the ascents and descents!"

"You're kidding!" I rejoined.

"No, I'm not," he said. "It's true . . . just wait and you'll see!"

133 487 491 It was approximately a 2 mile jaunt to Altit and the terrain was very much like the terrain we had encountered all the way up from Gilgit—washouts, rock slides, boulders strewn all over the place. This all made walking difficult, at least for me.

491 Now I don't want you to get the idea that when these landslides or rock slides occur they are just left where they fall, because that is the furthest thing from the truth. Immediately after these things happen, crews are put on to get things straightened away. But when you take into consideration that each speck of work is done manually and that they do not have even a wheelbarrow, you can then understand that the job is a difficult one and one that is back-breaking and requires much time.

The only implements I saw them use on the roads were a sort of pinch-bar or wedge and a sledge hammer. You see, they don't have dynamite and when a huge boulder lands smack in the middle or at the side of the road and can't be pushed off, the only other course to follow is to break it into small pieces. Those are the ways and means here of getting rid of huge boulders.

461 Let it also be clearly understood that the Hunza

workers are good workers. They are not to be compared with the ordinary workers found throughout Pakistan and India. They do a day's work somewhat comparable to that done in the West. They are neither slouchers nor slackers. 461

All along the route there were groups of men working here and there. At this time of the year there were not too many employed or working on the roads and this is understandable. Every man in Hunza and Nagir must provide for the winter. Remember, there is, broadly speaking, no money and the only means he has of providing is by the work done with his own two hands. 464 491

The dried apricots and other fruits that he may put away, the wheat or the barley or the buckwheat that he stores in his house, the few roots that he puts into his root cellar are his means of sustenance until next spring. So you can readily understand that there is no great surplus of Hunzans or Nagiriwals during the months of July and August to do work on the roads and I know that the Hunza Road is not maintained by the State of Pakistan. Therefore there would be little or no money forthcoming and those who did work would probably be donating their time. Or perhaps their work would be somewhat similar to a type of taxation, although I dislike using that word when referring to or talking about the people of Hunza! [251]

We were more than a sauntering hour reaching Altit. If you've got any ideas about easy walking in this land, you'd better forget them. 487

As is usual on the entire Hunza trail, with few exceptions, it was climbing or descending all the time. The few places where you were neither climbing nor going down, you were walking along the river bed. In midsummer when the glaciers are melting quickly you

487 often get a sudden heavy flow of water and these rivers get deeper and broader and flood the roads. But then later, when it gets a bit cooler or cloudy, the river recedes and the river bed is again used as a road.

The alternative for the river bed is to climb hundreds or thousands of feet up along a road cut in the rock of the mountain or where a ledge might have been formed. When it is impossible to walk along the river bed, and this occurs regularly, in some places you must climb a few thousand feet . . . that is the only way you can continue your journey.

No matter how difficult, how dangerous or treacherous a roadway may be, there are some people who must get across, who must make their journey at that time. It is true everywhere in the world.

Therefore, when traveling on such terrain, it is positively advisable to try to get there and do your traveling when the rivers are not in flood. You can see why the river bed is preferable.

361 Altit is the name of the town wherein is located the old Altit Fort which was built in the thirteenth century. I don't know whether or not the other members of the party will agree with me but I did think that Altit was an exceptionally clean, tidy and orderly town. It was one of the first villages in Hunza to be settled because the area consists of a wide level, arable stretch of land almost two miles wide from the mountain wall to the bank of the river and here the drop was sheer—straight down for a thousand feet or more.

Oh, yes, all Hunza villages are clean and orderly but somehow it struck me that Altit was better then most. [644] Perhaps the Mir knew this and that is why he had his picnic bungalow built there. I am convinced that Altit was the most attractive village I found in the entire country.

As we wound along the trail and through the streets of the village, I kept looking around to see if I could spot the bit of meadow or field where the yaks would be grazing. I felt certain that if they were being tethered or kept somewhere that there would be some sort of grazing ground for them and I found I was right because, shortly, we came upon a bit of meadow surrounded by shrubs and trees. And sure enough, there were the yaks and the herders. 231 311

The first thing I noticed about them was that they seemed to be snorting like wild bulls. They breathe rather heavily and exhale sharply through their nostrils. The altitude at Altit was probably about the same as that of Baltit—between 8,000 and 9,000 feet—and that was much too near the level of the sea to suit the yaks who wanted it at least 11,000 feet. Undoubtedly that was the reason they were snorting and appeared somewhat uncomfortable. 231 [361] [133]

I liked their rather shaggy, unkempt appearance. The woolly hair that grew around their head and on top of it, looked as though it had been curled. I didn't know whether that made them look ferocious or cute.

I took a keen liking to the strange looking beasts. But I'm not sure that they shared my feelings. At least, they didn't look as though they did.

I have read and been told that you can trust a yak implicitly on any trail. If it's safe and can be traversed, he'll make it. If there's any doubt, he'll be just as stubborn as any mule. Where the way or the road is extremely bad, he will refuse to go and only by brutal pounding and beating and dragging will he continue along the trail that he distrusts.

Through each yak's nose ran a rope—a good thick, heavy rope. This is used to guide or lead the yak, instead of a bridle and bit. [492]

231 The yak is just about the same general build and also somewhat the same in appearance as a buffalo. It is considered to be, by zoologists, a distant relative of the American buffalo. In fact, when I first saw a yak, I thought it was a buffalo and in my mind's eye, I compared it to the buffalos that I had seen in our Canadian zoos or parks. However, yaks do not have that hump around the neck, and they seemed a bit smaller. They are quite shaggy and look wild and ferocious, which belies their actual temperament.

We did find, and I had heard this before, that yaks are very independent—probably the most independent of all domesticated beasts. You just don't take liberties with a yak. You treat him fair and square or he doesn't cooperate—at least not very well.

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492 I walked around them and examined their shape and form and was especially interested in their broad backs. "Ah," I thought to myself, "that's the kind of an animal I want to ride—where I can sit on a flat surface instead of the apex of a triangle." My posterior was still smarting from the few miles I had ridden astride my horse. Even with the protection of the blanket, his backbone seemed to cut through like a razor. Right there and then I just had to get up on a yak's back and have someone take a picture.

"This should make a good caption," I thought to myself, "Jack on back of yak!"

The yak snorted a few times before and during the time I was getting on his back. But a few words and a jerk on his nostrils by his owner and he remained more or less orderly, but eyed me suspiciously.

Their broad well-filled backs and the sight of their feet with the sort of second set of hooves, fingers or spavins along the forelock told me that what the Mir had said about a comfortable even ride was true.

Many long years ago I learned not to doubt people 231 but to accept what they say until proven incorrect . . . be patient and allow time to speak. I accepted what the Mir told me but I wondered just how that miracle could take place. Upon examining the yak's feet or hooves or whatever else you might call them, I learned how this wonder of wonders occurred and I'm going to describe it to you. It will be difficult and you'll have to follow me rather closely.

If you examined a yak's forelegs, about 8 inches up from the hoof on the inside are appendages that look like spavins or callouses. These obviously are auxiliary paws, cushions or hooves. Therefore, the yak could, when necessary, walk on these appendages. It can be best illustrated by having you put your fingers straight up resting on the table. Then by dropping your fingers flat and putting down your wrist, you immediately shorten your arm by at least 6 inches. The yak could walk on its hooves or on the spavins 8 inches up along the leg.

Jahangir had never ridden a yak either, so he got 124 aboard one and I shot him a few times—that is, with the camera. He was quite pleased with himself, too, because that was something he hadn't anticipated when he started the journey.

Sultan Ali, our guide, said to me after I dismounted, "These men made quite a sacrifice in bringing the yaks down here from Passu. It's about 38 miles, you know, and they lose at least 2 or 3 days from work on their farms."

I knew quite clearly what he meant and I said, "Well, what do you think would be fair recompense for their efforts?"

"Well, about 40 rupees each."

Jahangir was standing besides me while this discus-

124 sion was taking place and he said to Sultan Ali, "That's[1]
[434] much too much! Why most people in Hunza don't get that much in a year. I don't think you should ask Mr. Tobe to give them that much money."

Sultan Ali and Jahangir exchanged a few fairly warm words about this and the end result was that Sultan Ali compromised by saying that maybe 20 rupees each would be satisfactory. So I dug into my pocketbook and handed each of them two 10 rupee notes.

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[1] [ie. 40 rupees - ANALYST]

CHAPTER 33

The Mir's Summer Cottage

1

Altit Fort has quite a history. I believe it to be the 344
most historic and most important edifice in all of 644
Hunza. Records that have been handed down would 712
indicate that the fort was about 700 years old and it
was erected like a perch, right on a sharp bank of the
Hunza River, on what was originally a sharp gigantic
precipice.

It may be smaller and perhaps simpler in construction than the larger fort at Baltit, but I thought it was big enough after I walked all around it and went in
and out of all its chambers. Then, too, it is much larger [643]
now than it was in those days because the present Mir had a new wing erected so that when he holds court and carries out the seed-sowing ceremony, there will be plenty of room for his family, guests and visitors.

I gained the impression that it was a tight little fortress—well built from blocks of rock, expertly

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712 wedged together to form a formidable protection against invaders of their day.

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643 'Tis for the Festival of the Bopfau, which is the Burushaski name given to the barley-seed-sowing festival, that the Mir comes dressed in all his regal finery and robes of state to practice a ritual that has been carried on for hundreds of years by the Mirs of Hunza.

[173] It would appear this ceremony is a carry-over from that performed by the ancient Greeks and the people of Hunza like to emphasize this, as though forging another link in the chain of evidence that would tie them in as descendants of Alexander the Great.

[292] On this occasion the Mir wears a magnificent gown with a wide belt fastened around his waist, in harmony with the gold brocade that bedecks the gown. At his side he carries the ceremonial sword in a carved ivory scabbard. He makes a most imposing, handsome figure with his head crowned with a clerical cap with flowing egret feathers held in place by a large golden pin. The Mir's brother, Ayesh, and the Mir's eldest son, the heir apparent, come similarly attired.

With an assembled crowd watching, the Mir drives a plough pulled by two oxen or a yak down and back along the field and into this furrow he sprinkles seed mixed with gold dust. The ceremony is repeated three times and then the Mir throws handfuls of the seed into the air. Fable has it that if anyone catches a grain of seed and takes it home and mixes it with his own seed, he will be assured of a fine harvest. [789]

The seed-sowing ceremony is not only performed at Altit but in two other Hunzan villages so that the Hunzan farmers can come and catch a seed to insure themselves of plenty for the following year. By doing it in three different locations, it means that no Hunzan farmer will have to walk more than a few miles to partake of the Mir's blessings.

partake of the Mir's blessings. 000

In comparing the fort at Altit and the one at Baltit, 344
I gained the impression that the one at Altit had more 644
rooms . . . smaller ones they were, but there seemed 712
to be more of them. The old fort at Baltit was much larger and more impressive. Yet somehow I became more attached to the Altit Fort. I had the impression that it was almost impregnable.

Then I recalled the true story of the capture of the 712
fort by the British and, after appraising its isolation, 648
strength and precipitous banks and sides, I thought to myself, "Any group of men who had the courage to attempt to scale and capture any fort in Hunza deserved a lot more glory and loot than they would ever get in Hunza . . . and that is for certain!"

On one of the balconies stood a man with a bowl 124
of apricots and Sultan Ali said, "This man is the chowkidor, or guardian, of the fort and it is customary to give him a gift."

"Of what?" I asked.

"Oh, about 10 rupees," replied Sultan Ali.

Jahangir almost jumped a foot when he heard that and he said, "For what? He hasn't done anything and we haven't eaten any of his apricots."

"Well," Sultan Ali said, "it's just customary!"

"Customary or no," said Jahangir, "I think it's ridiculous!"

I turned to Sultan Ali and said, "Normally I'd be 124
glad to give him the tip that you suggest, but the truth 122
of the matter is my fund of Pakistan rupees is just about nonexistent. When we set out for Hunza from Pindi we calculated in advance approximately how many rupees we would need and then we added on 100 extra, and that's what we came with.

"From the stories that we read and from the infor-

124 mation that we could gather, we were under the im-
122 pression that no money was used in Hunza. Therefore we didn't calculate on spending any. So far we have parted with approximately 300 rupees and to place the matter squarely in front of you, we don't have enough money to buy our plane tickets back from Gilgit to Rawalpindi! I'm hoping we'll be able to get some money at the bank in Gilgit because I did notice that there's a bank there, so I'm afraid I'll have to pass up the 10 rupees that I'm supposed to give the chowkidor of the fort. But tell him I enjoyed my visit to the fort very much anyway!"

344 While we were wandering around on the open bal-
644 cony of the old fort, Sultan Ali pointed to a neat looking place down below, but not far distant, and said, "That is the Mir's picnic place, where he comes every Saturday evening with his family. He stays there Sunday and Monday, returning to the palace for his various duties Monday evening. This practice is followed during the summer months."

"Well," I replied, "that's a custom that's followed
c pretty well in the West and probably in most places around the world . . . where one tries to get away from the usual home conditions and seeks refuge in a cottage. We, generally speaking, call this our summer cottage. And you know what? Many folks and families travel hundreds of miles just for the weekend, just as long as they can get away from home and the sameness of living for a few days at a time!"

"I guess we've seen everything here at the old fort worth seeing. So let's go down and make for the Mir's picnic place," I said as I headed for the stairs.

It was a walk of but a few hundred yards and we were soon at the garden gate of the bungalow. Sultan Ali spoke in Burushaski to one of the chowkidors who produced a key and opened the door. 344

Soon I was wandering through the well-appointed summer cottage. It was neat, tidy, clean and solidly built but of course it was not on par with the palace—nor would one expect it to be. After all, as mentioned, it was but a weekend spot and what we would call a summer cottage back home. Yet, of course, it was much nicer than the average summer cottage, but not as good as some of our elegant ones back home. 644

I was rather surprised and quite amused to note that the walls were covered rather widely with shiny lithographed pictures . . . yes, it was good printing or lithographing work. The pictures were obviously put out by the Chinese communist government and everywhere they showed workers and working girls with beaming faces, wearing good clothes and looking prosperous, but no one could doubt that these pictures were splendid specimens of communist propaganda. 353 648

One of the most effective pictures for propaganda purposes, I gathered, was one that showed the happy beaming faces of whites, yellows, blacks—all mixed and enjoying life together.

At first I thought that the Mir couldn't have known about these pictures hanging in his bungalow, but then I gathered that he must know about them. Evidently he doesn't fear them or worry about them. Perhaps he knows his people better than anyone else.

I do not have to go into a long discourse to prove to myself or to anyone else that the Mir does not have communistic leanings because communism would quickly and definitely stamp out any form of absolute rule like his Mirship. Yet I can also see the absolute necessity of the Mir keeping on friendly terms and not antagonizing either the Russian or the Chinese Communists. Then to make the situation even more hazard- 648

648 ous, the Russians have infiltrated Afghanistan. Therefore, Hunza is now completely hemmed in by what I would call the bamboo, the iron and the stone curtains.

I can't visualize where the Mir has too much to fear from Communist aggression. From what I have seen and learned, the Communists like their spots plush, soft and succulent. None of these conditions exist in Hunza!

The Communists like locations where they can eventually, if not immediately, take out more than they put in. That would never take place in Hunza. Then, too, people who have chosen to live on the north bank of the Hunza River would not be easily shackled
[643] or enslaved. Admittedly, the Mir is an absolute monarch but there are no signs of that type of rule in evidence anywhere in Hunza. There's a parallel in England. While England has a queen, a monarch whom the people respect and revere, whom they would follow in life and in death, the monarch would never make demands on her people.

I do not believe there is a more democratic nation on the face of the globe than Great Britain . . . and that includes the United States or other republics. I believe the same situation holds true in Hunza.

Another point to be considered by possible invaders is . . . What would they gain besides possible armed conflicts with Pakistan and perhaps India?

[353] No, I would suggest that Hunza is comparatively safe from communist aggression and the Mir can afford to have the communist propaganda pictures on the walls of his summer bungalow in Altit as a gesture of friendship.

247
177 The yard or garden around the bungalow[1] was aglow with flowers of every description and hue imaginable.

[1] [ie. of the Mir - ANALYST]

They were obviously of American or European origin 247
. . . probably grown from seeds that someone had sent 177
him. Plants like zinnias, snapdragons and asters were readily recognizable.

Then, I was very much surprised to see in front of 529
the bungalow, of all things, a swimming pool . . . and 643
the youth of the district were swimming and enjoying [644]
themselves to the fullest possible extent. They were shouting, laughing, splashing and cavorting about just as you would expect boys and girls to do in any swimming pool in America. They displayed the same reckless abandon, glee and happiness that our children do.

At this time I thought to myself that here was another mark of the Mir's bigness. He was allowing the children of the town to make full use of his personal family swimming pool. This was quite different from what most people expect of eastern potentates.

I'm not sure that this little incident impresses you but I assure you I was quite impressed by it. It added to my conviction that the people of Hunza were really free and democratic.

A little way off were our yaks and their guides. "Let's 000
go," I said to Jahangir and Sultan Ali, making straight for the yaks. "The Mir and Cec will be waiting for us, so I guess we'd best be off."

I selected the larger of the two yaks because I'm quite 492
a bit heavier, or almost twice as heavy as Jahangir. I was assisted on to the yak's back and the yak didn't seem to be too happy about it! For the first time since I'd been riding, which wasn't very long, I felt really comfortable. The well-padded broad back of the animal was delightful to sit on and, best of all, he had a western style saddle. I'm always afraid of falling off a horse with those English saddles because I've got nothing to hold on to except the reins and for my kind of

492 riding, I need more than that. Here I didn't have any reins but I could put my hands on the horn of the saddle. This was a case where I had the horn to hold onto and didn't need it. With those scrawny, skinny horses I could have used that appendage but I didn't have it.

This is also an excellent time to emphasize that a yak, whatever his sterling qualities, is by no means ever a speed demon . . . and that is for certain. He is built for comfort and security and my, oh, my, how important that is in the Karakorum or Himalayan terrain. The usual expected speed of a yak is approximately 9 miles per day which is somewhere around 1 mile per hour. However, I did not complain of the time that it took us to get from Altit to Baltit. I was having the time of my life and for once I wasn't the least bit afraid of falling off.

491 The road from Altit to Baltit actually is quite hilly —precipitous and steep in some places. But true to the Mir's prediction, I felt neither ascent nor descent because of the flexibility of the yak's legs.

Here I was 8,000 or 9,000 feet up in the firmament windingly wending my way around ledges and narrow trails while resting comfortably on the back of a yak. For the first time since leaving Gilgit I felt no fear or worry while riding. The beast on which I was sitting gave me a feeling of confidence.

The top of the final climb took us to the narrow opening of the valley. Here, if you turned right, the road led to the polo field and old Baltit Fort; if you turned left, to the Mir's courtyard.

115 I noticed what I thought to be a particularly unusual figure coming from the opposite direction, heading towards the pathway that led to the Mir's courtyard. He was in the company of another individual

whom I recognized as being a typical Hunzan. But the 115 old fellow who caught my attention did so because he was so strange looking. He was slightly stooped, short of stature, looked very old, had a firm yet halting walk and a beard of bright henna red and wore a long brown coat that touched his boots. It didn't require intuition or even a keen mind to recognize that this man was not ordinary in any sense of the word and I remarked to Sultan Ali that this was someone with whom I would like to converse—by means of an interpreter, or course.

We headed the yaks over so we'd be directly in front of the two as they passed by, and Sultan Ali spoke to them. Then he turned to me with a smile and said, "You are quite right, there *is* something most unusual [165 about this man. He says he's 105 years old today—it's 643] his birthday—and he's come to pay his respects to the Mir."

I allowed myself to slide down off the beast's back as I asked Sultan Ali to introduce me to the fine old fellow and we shook hands. He said, "Salaam aleikum!" and I, too, said, "Salaam aleikum!"

I was really very happy and felt privileged to meet a grand old man like this!

I appraised him from head to foot, scrutinized every part of him—up, down, to the right, to the left—and I smiled as best I knew so as not to offend the fine old fellow. He was indeed a patriarchal old man, but he still looked in mighty fine fettle; he'd come from a little farm a few miles away, on foot!

The old man's name was Dado and he lived in Hasanabad. He has one son, two grandsons, three granddaughters and fifteen great-grandchildren. Dado [165] has 10 close friends, all of whom are more than 95 years of age. Membership in that exalted group is hard to come by . . . a most restricted organization.

115 165 Now I didn't see his birth certificate and I might as well tell you, right here and now, that no vital statistics are kept in Hunza. I accept the figure of his age as he told me but remember, I was not there at the time of his birth!

344 644 When I was through with my spasm of inspection and admiration, we began to parade up the long driveway that led into the Mir's garden. This area is flanked on the right by space that looks as though it were a parking lot, and maybe that's exactly what it is, but instead of cars, the guests or members of the family park—or should I say tether—their horses and yaks in this area. Maybe now they park their jeeps there. [493] The Mir owns two of them, but one, I understand, was away in Pindi being repaired. (Or was it the shambles and horrible wreck of a jeep that I came across a week later, on the road back to Gilgit?)

126 Now I noticed that the Mir, Ayesh, the doctor and Cec were coming along the roadway to meet us, and soon we joined forces and were gathered in one group. I thought this was the ideal time to take some photographs and, luckily for us, they were the best photographs we took on the entire trip. Photography is something that has never interested me and I had never [122] taken half a dozen pictures in my life. Before leaving home, I did try to learn a bit about photography, but I couldn't learn enough fast enough.

124 When the fun, excitement and fast-flowing humorous remarks had subsided, I said to the Mir, "If you've nothing more important to do or if you would care to give me a little more of your time, we could start that question and answer session that I arranged with you for this afternoon."

"I am at your service," he replied pleasantly and with alacrity.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

So the Mir, the doctor and I proceeded up the stairs to his famed reception sun room. He instructed one of his people, in his own language and soon we were comfortably seated with an assortment of cold drinks before us. 124

The Mir, the doctor and I then had a long session. I asked questions of the doctor just as readily as I did of the Mir and both answered with equal frankness. At no time did one look at the other to ascertain whether or not he should answer the question. Everything was done on a strict, clear-cut, frank basis.

CHAPTER 34

About the People of Hunza

164 165 The Claims made for the people of Hunza border on the fantastic. It is claimed that there they live to be 140 and more years of age without trouble and that their mountain home is the genuine Shangri-la, where a man can live without worry or stress in perfect joy and happiness. The claim is also made that their men can sire children when they're 70, 80, 90 and even 100 years of age.

Yes, and another visitor to Hunza said that the women of 80 and 90 are as youthful and as beautiful as our own women of 30 and 40. Well, apart from the [644] Rani who I truly believe was one of the most beautiful women I have ever been privileged to see, I didn't notice anything spectacular about the women of Hunza.

123 Let me be even more frank . . . I hardly saw any women at all. Over the many miles of Hunza territory that I walked, I seldom saw a woman. I saw a few girls

here and there and most of them snickered, giggled and hid or turned their backs so that I couldn't see their faces, just as the girls and women did in Nagir. I did notice and pass many women constantly in the fields, but not once did I think that they even compared with our own attractive women . . . let alone surpass them! 123

Nor do I want you to get the impression that I am prejudiced. To me, at least, a woman can be beautiful whether she be black, yellow, tanned or white. I believe myself to be the kind of a man who shows no prejudice, at least where women are concerned, if you know what I mean!

Here I also want to state that it could be I was somewhat at a disadvantage. In the Western world, when one meets or sees a woman, it is usually at her best or close to it. Here the situation was, I admit, drastically different. I either saw them in the fields or coming or going to and from the fields to their homes or doing household chores in their homes. None of these occupational hazards would give a woman a chance to show herself at her prettiest or to her own best advantage.

I did not inquire as to the Rani's age. I am generally 644
fairly bold but I just wasn't bold enough to pose that 165
question to the Mir or to the Rani herself, although I had ample opportunity to do so had I the courage.

She would compare favorably in every way with any woman in her twenties. If I did not know her position and I were asked to estimate her age, I would say 24 or 25 but remember, she is the wife of the Mir and has borne him 9 living children, one of whom is married and another of whom is engaged to be married to the Prince of Chitral. Their eldest daughter is married to Yaseen Durishahwar and they have two sons, which means that the Rani is a grandmother. But I still insist that she doesn't look a day over 25.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

128 As I sat and pondered my experiences—things that I had actually seen and witnessed, people whom I had met and talked to—I wondered and asked myself, "Will I be the man who will destroy the myth or will I corroborate it?"

Then I did a little soul searching. When an individual does that, it means he is troubled . . . and I admit that that was exactly my predicament.

I have tried to ascertain the truth of everything I have recorded and related in this book. Most of the time I was fortunate enough to see and do these things for myself. However, some information I had to obtain by asking questions and probing, but in every case I believed the information sincere and honest. You will note that, at all times, I sought my information from the highest and best informed sources available—even at the danger of annoying my host. Friendship and decorum are important conventions but, with me anyway, the quest for knowledge knows no bounds.

There may be errors and omissions and even falsehoods in my story but if there are any, it is by sheer accident or by willful misrepresentation on the part of someone else. Inasmuch as I am concerned, every statement made in this book is true, to the best of my innermost belief and knowledge.

124
128 There were many instances, while gathering this information, where facts, stories and other data were related to me and I doubted their veracity. So right there and then I said so. In some instances, I told the people who were giving me information that what they said did not make sense, and either they must have misunderstood or there was something being lost or twisted in the translation. I recall at the moment three such specific instances with entirely different groups and in each case, upon studying and revamping the

question, the error was cleared up. 128

Remember, I do not claim to be a Sherlock Holmes 124
or smart enough to detect by scent or otherwise an untruth or misunderstanding, so they may crop up in various places in the book.

Long before I left home I had prepared a set of queries. Among them were things for me to investigate —places, customs and chores for me to see and do. And from all this I was to make my own values and estimates as to the validity of the claims made about Hunza and its people. I tried to cover every aspect of importance and interest and I believe that, with very few exceptions, I faithfully accomplished my mission.

In preparation for the trip I read every book I could 122
find or locate that involved Hunza and in each case 114
the author had done a credible job, but most of them had failed miserably to give sufficient information—at least, for me—because 'twas information that I wanted. I wanted to know more about the agriculture of Hunza, about the health of the people, about their methods, their means and their way of life. None of the authors gave much of that vital data.

Right from the first moment that I made plans to go 12
to Hunza I decided that, if I wrote a book, it would 114
contain the most complete, the most detailed and the most thorough study of the people of Hunza yet accomplished by any writer. This determination came upon me from the frustrations I felt when I read the available books on Hunza and was left with a feeling that only the surface of the subject had been scratched.

In my endeavors to fulfill this undertaking, I have spared neither time, effort, risk nor expense. I certainly don't want my readers to be left with the feeling that all about Hunza has not been told. I definitely realize that no one in a short few weeks or even months could

121 learn all there is to know about these most unusual
114 people. At least I wanted to learn the answers to the many questions that come into the average individual's mind.

Therefore, it is my hope that I have not failed in these positive respects.

If my narrative is not everything that you hoped and expected, I sincerely trust that I will make up in the details and information of an authentic nature that I give to you concerning these remarkable people.

142 The facial features of the people of Hunza are most striking. They are invariably finer featured than the people of the West—more angular, more clearly outlined and defined, without being harsh or bold. Their facial characteristics can best be described by the phrase "finely, delicately chiseled physiognomy" . . . like the intricate creations of a gifted sculptor.

Whether because of the rugged outdoor life they lead or because of the tanning or curing process of their smoke-filled homes during the winter, the texture of their skin is quite unusual. I think I can describe it best if I say that their faces looked as though they were made out of smooth chamois.

I was struck by the similarity of the features of the people of Hunza. In the West, everybody you meet or know doesn't look like anyone else that you know. In fact, if you do happen to come across someone who has the likeness or features similar to those of someone else you know, you're immediately struck by that resemblance, which illustrates my point. In the Western world, there is a wide divergence of facial features and characteristics. In Hunza that does not hold true.

A little thought will establish the reason for this
[143] situation. Intermarriage during the centuries must have been the order of the day because of the confining nature of their homeland.

nature of their homeland. 000

However, the Mir pointed out to me most clearly 582
and emphatically that intermarriage among members 143
of one tribe is absolutely forbidden. There are four [101]
tribes in the Baltit area and they can marry among
these four tribes . . . Diramiting, Khorokoch, Borong,
Barataling . . . but definitely not among their own tribe.

Lest this sounds like a difficult matter to hold in [585]
check, I want to explain that this is easier to control than may be imagined, for the simple reason that all marriages must be sanctioned and performed by the Mir. Therefore he positively knows who is marrying whom.

However, even if this has been the rule for many 161
hundreds of years, the total population of Hunza, even 582
today, stands at something less than 25,000 souls and 143
Lord Curzon in his memoirs states that in 1894, the total population of Hunza was only 6,000. Therefore, among so small a population, it is almost impossible for them to marry very far beyond a family relationship. (In 1934 it was estimated that the population had risen to 15,000.)

Let's put it in another way. If the people of Hunza have remained more or less a pure people for nigh on 1,000 years and the population today is only 25,000, there must have been fairly close intermarriages. Perhaps that would, as I mentioned, account for the similarity of features.

I want to stress, at this point, that I came to Hunza 121
primarily to learn and study (1) about their health and longevity and (2) about their means and methods of agriculture.

Let's examine or re-examine a few of the more 000
pertinent details of their unusual country.

Hunza is a country that lies along the Hunza River

131 Hunza is a country that lies along the Hunza River from Secunderabad to the Chinese border, a distance of somewhere around 200 miles, but no one has ever actually measured it. At the narrowest point it is less than half a mile wide. At its broadest, it is not quite [133] two miles. Usually the only piece of flat land in a village [134] is the polo field. Good, rich, deep soil as Westerners know it is absolutely unknown in Hunza.

311 [361] Whenever a house is built here, they seldom ever use a piece of fertile soil or soil of any kind. They usually erect it on rock or on a steep hillside where that piece of land could not have been used for agriculture anyway.

[241] Practically every bit of farm land is terraced. It can be said, it is actually cut out of the rocks of the mountainside which is the north bank of the Hunza River.

[134] Of the total length of 200 miles, only a small fraction is at all arable. Most of it is solid rock or terrain so steep that horticulture of any nature is impossible.

312 [132] Rainfall is scanty. They cannot depend upon it at all for crops. In order to get sufficient water, hand built and similarly maintained conduits bring water down [241] from glaciers. These conduits are carefully erected and trained to run alongside the villages where the water can be trapped to flow where desired and used to irrigate their lands, also for drinking and all other necessary purposes.

There are four main conduits in Hunza and they are as follows:

Murku—This is at the highest level of all the aqueducts and carries the most water.

Barbar—Supplies the Baltit-Altit area.

Dala—This is the longest—extends as far as Aliabad. Supplies Kerimabad.

Hamachi—The smallest which runs as far as the tiny village Ganesh, located on a cliff's edge.

Water rights are regulated by law and a man can 312
use the water from the conduit that passes his land at [423]
certain definitely established periods. The flow or shut-off is controlled by placing a large stone or rock at the opening of the channel into the individual's waterway. It may sound a bit baffling to the average individual, but upon viewing it and examining it, it is easy to understand and, what's more important, it is simple and practical.

Nowhere did I see these waterways covered or encased in pipes—although they did in many places run under the roadway.

As their water supply is glacier-fed, there is never any danger of a supply failing . . . at least, not in the imminent future. However, in cloudy periods the flow slackens and an extended cloudy period causes a severe water shortage.

Lest you get the idea that these conduits or waterways are a simple matter, I want to assure you that they are a marvel of engineering. Further, when you [412]
consider that the first one was built about 1860 without any man made tools or iron or steel, you can then believe what a difficult and gigantic undertaking it was. It is a monument to their industry, intelligence and foresight. At least now, they have iron picks with which to dig, rather than having to use ibex horns.

Here I want to mention very definitely that the same type of waterway exists on the other side of the river . . . that is, in Nagir territory.

They do not, in any sense of the word, have orchards 245
as we know orchards in the West, because they don't 311
have a piece of land large enough or flat enough to compare with what we know as an orchard. In the West orchard sites are usually selected with the premeditated view of providing excellent drainage. There-

245
311 fore, knolls or rolling lands are preferred and gravelly, sandy or light loam soils are chosen.

There are neither rolling lands nor tilthy knolls in Hunza. Here they have to take what they can get and make the best of it. The precipitous bits of arable land are terraced to prevent erosion and the flat pieces, such as there are, create no drainage problem because there is no danger of too much rain.

You will seldom see more than a few dozen fruit trees in one group or area. They are scattered here, there and everywhere and are planted only where and when they can grow to best advantage.

I would also like to mention that fruit and walnut trees are found growing almost everywhere along the roads or trails in the populated area, so no bit of arable land, no matter where it is found, is wasted.

245 I do not know if there is any dispute as to who owns the crops but all the way from Gilgit to Altit I did not find a bit of ripe fruit on the trees—which means most clearly that somebody harvests the crops at just the right time or when the fruit is at or about proper maturity.

433
251 From some of the larders that I examined, I gathered that they certainly wouldn't have any overabundance and I further felt that, by the time winter and early spring passed and before the new crops were ready to harvest, some bellies might have thinned out and some more might even be hungry.

There was no reason for me to disbelieve the Mir when he said Hunza was the "land of just enough" but I still felt that, by the look of things, there would be many occasions when that "just enough" might have to be stretched a little. I was convinced that they certainly did not have too much of any food commodity.

142 The only two stout men that I met on my entire

sojourn through the area were the Mir's two brothers. 142 The Mir himself, while not tall, is well-built and muscular, but shows no sign of fat.

The Hunzan fruit crops, from my careful observations, are as follows: apricots, Persian walnuts, mulberries, peaches, plums, pears and cherries. These were the sweet cherries. Nowhere did I see any sign of the sour or pie cherries. 245

Further, I noticed that all of the trees of this type that I saw were old. There were not many young trees, but that is understandable because they allow a tree to grow as long as it is able to bear fruit and they have little or no new space to plant young trees.

The walnut, the mulberry and the apricot trees grow to enormous size—far stronger, broader and heavier than they ever grow in America, although I have seen huge walnut trees and huge cherry trees in the Western world. Peach, pear, plum and apple are not grown nearly as much as the other kinds mentioned.

CHAPTER 35

The Hunzan Economy

243 From The thrice-told tales of people who write about Hunza and its fertile fields, one might rightfully expect to see bountiful crops of grain bending in the breeze, but I did not expect to see great expanses of waving golden wheat fields in Hunza, so I was not disappointed. The flight from Pindi to Gilgit told me the story better than words. The harsh, flint rock mountains and meager valleys made agriculture a serious, unrelenting affair that taxed man's ingenuity and endurance.

In field crops the Hunzans grow wheat, which I found to be one of their most important foods. I saw more wheat than any other grain. Then there were
[244] buckwheat, peas, broad beans, lucerne, millet, barley, rice, onions, potatoes, carrots, turnips and lettuce.

It is said that they can grow two crops a year and, while I did not actually see two crops produced, I noticed that the wheat was harvested in late July and there would still be ample time to grow another crop before the frost came. Therefore, that adds credence to the statement that they can grow two crops a year. 243

I gathered that buckwheat was their most important second crop and it was not hard to understand, because it thrives on the poorer and lighter soils, where other grains might not do as well. Further, it needs only about ten weeks to mature and it has the added advantage of flowering and setting its crops continuously, so that a fair harvest can be had at most any time.

Then, too, it is a crop that can stand the colder weather; that is, the chilly nights in early fall and spring that they are bound to have in these high mountain areas. In actuality, the buckwheat blooms continually and flowers, green seed and ripe seed can be found on the plants at one and the same time.

There is another good reason why the Hunzans grow a lot of buckwheat. It invariably leaves the soil in splendid physical condition and believe me, that is very, very important to the people of Hunza. In addition, [231] this crop makes splendid food for their farm animals. It makes a fine green manure as well as a weed smother crop.

It must be remembered that buckwheat makes a dandy emergency crop if and when other earlier crops have failed. So it is not hard to understand why it would be one of the most important grain crops in Hunza.

They don't have bees in Hunza, I was sorry to learn, 262
and therefore there is no buckwheat honey. 231

The Hunzans are chiefly vegetarians—whether by [311] choice or necessity is hard to establish, although I would say that they had little choice in the matter because they just don't have the area to waste on animals. They can't afford to get their food second-hand. While there 311

311 were a few valleys where a bit of pasture might have been established or used, they just couldn't afford to waste acres for pasture purposes.

234 I did not see any cheese—that is, cheese as we know
251 it—in Hunza, but I maintain that their stored butter is
262 cheese. I knew from what I had read and learned that
they have a most unusual method of storing their butter, and one day the Mir sent one of his servants out to bring some in. In a few minutes the servant returned, carrying on a tray a huge bundle that looked like and was slightly larger than a football. He placed it in front of me and told me to go ahead and unwrap it, which I did. It was neatly and firmly wrapped in birchbark and when I removed layer after layer of wet, dripping bark, I at last came to the so-called butter. It was gleaming pure white. A knife was handed to me and I dug a little piece out of the side and tasted it. It was absolutely delicious. It had a fresh wholesome flavor. I thought it was cheese and that is what I really believe it is.

234 Their method of making this butter is as follows: Goat, sheep, cow or yak milk is used. Their method of churning butter is strictly Eastern. They do not use wooden or metal churns as they are found and known in the West. Usually goat skins are used. They are turned inside out so that the smooth, tanned side is outside. Then the ends of the hide are carefully sewn together. Openings are allowed to remain by means of the legs, and these are used for filling the skin with the milk to be churned and later to extract the butter. While the churning is taking place, the leg openings are firmly tied.

Then the milk-filled hide is joggled, weedled, spanked, turned and twisted over the knees and this is maintained continually until some sort of solidification takes place. Just as with us, impatience and inquisitive-

ness become master and the shaking is stopped, while 234
a peek is taken by untying a leg opening to see if the process is beginning.

When at last butter is formed, it is squeezed out of 234
the skin churn and then they make firm round balls out 251
of it. It is wrapped in birchbark, placed underneath a water channel and left there for months, or years as the case may be. One record through which I poured related that this butter was sometimes kept for 100 years. I found no verification of this from the citizens of Hunza. Perhaps in this instance the butter was forgotten [262]
and was discovered many years later, but it is kept for years and is usually brought out for special celebrations and other occasions.

Now you will hear the word "ghee" referred to on 234
every hand when talking about food. This is the selfsame 262
butter but heated to the melting point and allowed to harden. By then it turns into a bright yellow color. It is used as a spread but also for cooking, baking, frying and such. Most Hunzans prefer "ghee" over the plain ordinary butter. The Mir told me that he and his household all preferred it to butter.

So therefore, besides the fruit, nuts, grain and vegetable 262
crops, they have curd, ghee, butter (cheese) and milk. Those who do eat meat would be lucky if they could afford to have it more than two or three times a year, but I understand meat is available for most festive occasions.

While in all probabilities they dry other types of fruit, 251
I did not see any other dried fruits but apricots. On my travels throughout the country I saw thousands of trees and probably millions of apricots but I did not see one go to waste. Everywhere I went apricots were drying. They had been split open, the stone removed and stored and the fruit left for the sun and air to cure and dry

251 them. Even apricots that were bruised, damaged or even starting to rot were put out to dry. No treatment of any kind was used . . . just simply nature at work.

245 [428] [423] An apricot tree is a most valuable asset in Hunza. It is a fact that an apricot tree is often willed to a daughter by parents and she can retain her rights to the tree and of course the crops that come from it for her lifetime.

In the Western world, the apricot is not considered a long-lived tree. In America, especially, it is considered not much longer lived than a peach or a plum and that means at the most, 25 or 30 years of life. When you take into consideration the truth that in Hunza apricot trees live to be well over 100 years, one wonders just where the difference comes in.

245 242 I really believe that I have the answer. In Hunza apricots are grown from seed. No matter where I looked or sought I could find no tree nursery in either Nagir or Hunza. (I did find a small government nursery in Gilgit.) Therefore I would assume that every Hunzan farmer grows his own trees from the planting of the apricot seeds. No doubt some Hunzan farmers are more adept at this task than others and they probably grow a few extra ones and maybe trade them for other things with their neighbors.

But, as explained, the trees here last many, many years and the orchard space or land to grow them on is very limited. Therefore, there would be little or no demand for nursery stock. I inquired wherever I went concerning grafting and I tried to establish whether or not they knew anything about the process and how much they knew, but I came up against a blank wall. I could gather no definite information. That they know how to graft and are acquainted with the process, I am sure but to what extent it is used, I could not establish.

Now the case in the Western world and specifically 245
in America is entirely different. Most of the apricots 242
in America are positively grafted or budded on either plum or peach rootstock. This tends to make the tree bear a crop much sooner than it would on its own roots. On a plum root the apricot tree will grow in damp soils that would not be tolerated by the apricot itself or by the apricot grown on a peach root. However, the fact that the apricot is budded on peach or plum definitely makes its life span about 30 years at the utmost.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, nowhere in America can you purchase apricot seedlings, nor are they listed by any of the wholesale nurseries or growers. This would clearly indicate that apricots are invariably grown on a foreign rootstock as mentioned above. Undoubtedly this has much to do with the longevity of the Hunzan apricot trees. In Europe apricot seedlings are available and used as the rootstock on which to graft and bud apricots, which is as it should be.

However, from my investigations, I did learn that more than 20 different kinds of apricots are known and grown in Hunza. This does prove that grafting or
budding or both are known in Hunza. The fruit that I 245
did see and eat was by no means superior to that grown in the rest of the world. In fact, if anything, it was of inferior size and quality.

This may come as a shock to many people who believe that everything the people of Hunza do is superior to that done anywhere else in the world. Unfortunately, I must relate things as I found them.

In America, for example, a farmer would not hesitate to remove a tree or even an orchard that was producing undersized or inferior quality fruit, because he's depending on his fruit for marketing purposes. Remember, too, in America size and yield are the two most im-

245 portant qualities desired by all fruit growers. The reason is obvious . . . because the consuming public will readily buy the larger fruits. The quality is practically always judged by appearance, not by its flavor.

For the moment I am using exactly the same yardstick in Hunza and it is upon that fact that I am making my comparison. I have discovered the reason why all travelers to Hunza report the high succulent good flavor of the Hunzan apricot, and the explanation is simple. Invariably, when you eat an apricot in Hunza, it has been tree-ripened or you pick it directly from the tree and eat it and it is at its pinnacle of flavor and goodness, whereas in America, when you buy apricots, whether at a fruit stall or supermarket, that selfsame apricot might have been picked two weeks prior when it was green and ripened artificially or at least ripened away from its parent. Therefore, no comparison in flavor can be made.

Another valid reason for the popularity, or should I say necessity, of growing apricots in that mountainous region is because the apricot is one of the first trees to ripen its fruit. Apricots as a rule mature with cherries. However, the cherry requires a much shorter period from blossom to fruit and to make up this period, the apricot blooms very early. In fact, it is generally conceded to be the first of all tree fruits to show its flowers. A few warm sunny days in the early spring will bring out the apricot blossoms in their full charm and beauty.

It is seldom that they get through their blossoming period without frost of lighter or greater degree striking them, whether it be in Hunza or Niagara. But the apricot blooms, even though beautiful and tender of look, are really rugged and hardy, can take the cold weather and mature large crops of delicious fruit in spite of the chilly, frosty weather at blossoming time.

Among people—yes, even experienced old-time gardeners and orchardists—there are many who believe that pollination by bees is required in all cases to set a crop of fruit. For many types of fruit and plants, this holds true; pollination by bees or other insects is essential. But in the case of the apricot and many others, wind pollination is the means that nature employs, and actually it is safer and surer than pollination by insects. Rain is also an effective pollinator, contrary to many people's conception and belief. I believe I would be safe in stating that wind pollination is the means of fertilizing more plants than can be claimed for bees and other insects combined. 245

All Hunzans own their own land and house. They pay no rent or taxes. Each citizen does his share of road building, taking care of the water channels and maintenance. The Mir leases his land to various individuals, most of them young people who as yet own no land of their own, or those who have insufficient for their needs. They pay him by means of services rendered and shares of the crops. 423 651 [653] 427 643

CHAPTER 36

2000 Years of Bread!

256 ONE OF THE THINGS that I did want to witness with my own eyes was the feeding and operation of a flour mill in Hunza. Apart from all of the other important and interesting data that I had hoped to gather while in this part of the world, the operation of the wheat mill was one that to me had great portent. I wanted to see the wheat actually going into the mill and coming out as flour.

000 Bread is said to be the staff of life. Well, whether it is or not remains a moot question. But to me at least, bread is important. I always have been a big bread eater.

121
262 Now it was only during the past few years that by reading and learning I found out how useless or even harmful the pleasant white loaf that we know in America is and can be. Having a fair idea about the health record as it exists in America and knowing the kind of

bread we eat, I was greatly interested when I heard 121
about the people of Hunza and then found out that 262
they eat only bread that is made from whole grain.

Then, when the same books or facts brought to light that the people of Hunza knew few of the world's ills, my interest was aroused to almost a fever pitch. I wondered if there was any connection between the kind of bread that we ate and our health and the kind of bread they ate in Hunza and their health.

From my own observations I also learned that wheat 243
was the most important crop in Hunza, with the exception of apricots. I have also tried to establish which 000
was the first domesticated grain in the annals of human history and I have not been able to establish clearly whether it was wheat or millet. But wheat is more adaptable to the temperate zones, whereas millet leans more to the warmer climes and it is clearly established that wheat is preferred by the white races.

I soon learned that there was a flour mill that func- 256
tioned regularly, located on the route that we took from the palace at Baltit to the old palace or old fort. So on one of my walks I made it a point to investigate thoroughly the location, the workings and the construction of this old mill.

On my way up when we stopped at Chalt I saw one of these mills in operation, but I did not actually see the grain being made into flour.

For a man who has spent most of his life in the country and on a farm, I feel embarrassed to admit that I had never seen a flour mill in operation before.

During the past quarter of a century, or even a longer period, milling has, generally speaking, come into the hands of large corporations and that is why, I assume, I got it into my head that milling was a complicated big-time operation that required a great investment

256 and the hiring of many employees. I've tried to analyze how I mentally reached these conclusions and eventually I saw the light. I knew that the grain had to be stored in huge elevators, then transported to the mill in carload quantities and from the railroad cars it was carried or blown into huge bins and then from there into hoppers that fed it into the rolling mill itself. Then the process of separating the bran, then the wheat germ and then the flour took place. The next process, I understood, was for the flour to be ground even more minutely and then bleached. After this had all been accomplished there were some government rules or regulations that compelled the mills to fortify or replace some of the important values that had been removed.

Now after you have read the above, can you blame me for getting the idea that milling was a costly and complicated process? Again, I must confess, even to the extent of being embarrassed, that I had to travel to Hunza to learn the truth about milling. Then perhaps I need not be ashamed of my ignorance because the problem of making bread from grains has been plaguing mankind for more than 6,000 years, during which time much blood has been shed, governments have been overthrown and billions of dollars in profits have been made. Yes, the whole story of human existence can be written and told in terms of man's staff of life—bread!

When we stop to realize that bread has been the mainstay of human diet for almost 6,000 years, we ought to bury our heads in shame to admit that our knowledge concerning this life-giving or life-destroying food is so meager and inadequate. Not one person in a thousand realizes, knows or understands, what is contained in the food upon which he leans heavily and of which he consumes large quantities, not only every day but in most cases, at every meal. 256

It came as quite a surprise to me to learn that milling was one of the most simple operations that could be devised and that difficulties and complications only arose when we sought to deviate from the natural way of doing things.

So now at last I was there watching a Hunzan flour mill in action. In all probabilities the same milling process is followed in practically all countries of the world where flour is milled in a simple manner.

My first impression as I watched the flour pouring from between the revolving stones was, "How easy—how utterly simple! Why should anyone in the world be denied access to that vital health-giving food?" Any man can have his own pure whole wheat flour, from which he can have made his wholesome delicious whole wheat bread, by the simple means of putting a grain of wheat between two stones and rubbing the two stones together.

In this Hunzan flour mill, wheat is poured into a suspended hopper made of wood, but shaped like and about the same size as a grain sack and tapered to a narrow opening just above the millstones. Attached under the opening is a small trough, tilted slightly. This trough sits with its lower end over the hole in the stone. Then right there at the mouth of the trough a wooden stick is attached so that it will dangle at the mouth of the opening and as the mill rotates, this stick taps against the opening and causes the grain to drop out in regulated amounts. Thus, the flow of the wheat into the opening of the millstone is governed.

The millstone is rotated by direct drive from the water wheel. From the conduit up above, a stone is removed and the water is allowed to run down a spillway, which leads under the mill house and is made to [37.6]

256 splash against the water wheel or paddle. The force is
[376] sufficient to make the millstone revolve at a tremendous
pace. The water can be quickly shut off by just putting
the missing stone back in place, diverting the water
flow down the conduit.

The millstones are enclosed by a tray or bin about
5 or 6 inches high. As the ground wheat or flour is
forced out between the stones, it slowly fills the bin.
Then it is scooped up into goatskin bags, usually by a
[262] woman who is looking after the mill. In this manner it
is carried to the individual homes to be used in making
the wholesome whole wheat Hunzan bread and
chapatties.

There appeared to be no large scale or assembly line grinding. Each individual came in with a container of wheat to be ground.

[262] Barley and rye are also used for flour and occasionally, millet and buckwheat.

262 The earliest crop that can be ground into flour in
Hunza is barley. After the long winter, food supplies
[243] are worn to the near starvation level and when the first
[527] barley is ready for harvest, people of Hunza have cause
to celebrate and do so in their barley festival.

252 262 I soon learned why chapatties were used in preference to bread, not only in Hunza but all over Pakistan and India. A chapatty requires only flour and water, a bit of mixing and then rolling out and laying on a piece of metal that is laid over a fire. In a few minutes it can be turned and then it is ready for eating. Even though bread might taste better, it certainly would require a lot more preparation. Simplicity is the keynote!

251 From what I saw, very little flour is stored and probably the people of Hunza have long ago learned their lesson, that wheat ground into flour does not have long keeping qualities.

There is more wheat grown in Hunza than any other single grain crop. Therefore the wheat they use must be one of the vitally important contributors to the health of these people. 243 [164]

If you will take time to study the habits or the peculiarities concerning the growing of wheat, you will quickly learn that wheat will not grow on poor or unbalanced soils. One of the first things that my father taught me many long years ago was that your best land must be used if you want to grow a good crop of wheat. Rye or barley, he told me, you can grow most anywhere, but wheat is fussy. If the nutrients aren't there in the soil, the wheat will not grow and your crop will be a failure. All through my travels in Nagir and Hunza I saw wheat and it looked good. It wasn't the same tall wheat that we grow in the Canadian West, but it was wheat and the yield was comparatively bountiful, which means that the Hunzan soil must contain the required nutrients—and to grow wheat, there are many.

Therefore there is a direct connection between the nutrient contents of the soil of Hunza and the wheat that it grows, the flour that they use, the bread that they eat and the health of these people.

Here and now I want to explain that I am not making decisions for anyone. I am trying to lay down the facts as I found them. As stated above, in order to grow good wheat or even to grow wheat at all, the soil must contain all of its required nutrients. It is obvious, therefore, that the soil has the required nutrients and as all of the Hunzan soil is shallow, these nutrients must be regularly reincorporated into the soil. 243 134

I have already related that everything that is taken from the soil is returned to the soil by the natives. Consequently we know that nothing is lost. Hunza does not export food. That I know, because there is barely 243 [439]

243 sufficient for their own needs. They often trade or [438] barter with the Nagirwals for short items.

Therefore, is the ordinary means of field husbandry as practiced by the people of Hunza the answer? It must be at least part of the story, but how big a part, I am unable to say.

CHAPTER 37

Hunza Fat Factory

I Sometimes Believe—in fact, it is a conviction of mine—that in America we waste or cast aside the most vital parts of many foods and we use as food the part that is of lower nutritive content. ooo

In Hunza the kernels of the apricots are gathered and stored. Some of them are cracked and eaten out of hand. But the major portion is put away for future use and then turned into apricot oil. 251 262

Never, ever did I see one single apricot kernel wasted in Hunza. If you tasted the kernel of the apricot, you'd soon know why. It is every bit as delicious and fine flavored as the finest almond. In fact, the almond, peach and apricot are very closely related. I contend that the flavor of the apricot seed is every bit as good as that of the almond. The almond, however, gains its popularity and superiority because of its thinner shell, which means easier cracking.

251 It is clear that the Hunzans have long, long ago learned a secret that we in the Western world have only discovered recently . . . that the nut or kernel of a fruit or seed deteriorates rapidly and can be the cause of ill health if allowed to remain for any length of time outside its natural shell or covering and then consumed . . . for the Hunzans never crack the hard coat of the apricot stones until they want to use the kernels. From 000 my experience with seeds of varying kinds and types during the past 30 years—whether grain, vegetable, fruit, nut or other—I have learned that no living seed whatsoever should have its skin or shell broken or removed until it is actually going to be eaten, planted or put to some other use.

Within the walls of the seed or nut coat are contained some of nature's greatest miracle workers. Underneath that ingenious covering are found the required enzymes, the spark of life, that breaks dormancy and tells the seed when to start to grow . . . or that can hold that large, tiny or microscopic embryo in suspended animation for a few hours or a thousand years, until conditions amenable to the needs of that species are located. If and when the environmental factors are met, the seed coat immediately fulfills its function and growth begins.

Therefore, it is never advisable to remove the shell or the protective coat from any seed or grain—especially of those that are going to be eaten.

It has been recently disclosed by science that seeds whose outer coatings have been removed can be harmful if eaten by a human. In some instances, it is suspected that they can be of carcinogenic character. Is it not remarkable that these people, who have had little or no contact with what we know as civilization and learning, have for almost 2000 years known enough not to do things that we have learned about only recently?

I had never seen oil made or rendered from any fruit, 252
food or grain and I asked if I could be allowed to witness this process from the beginning. Arrangements were made and I went to visit a plain ordinary Hunzan house where the mistress was prepared and willing to demonstrate the making of apricot oil.

The lady and some of her children sat on the floor with a neat stack of apricot stones beside them. Then she and one of her youngsters took each individual stone and split it open with a rock. The meats were taken out and piled into a stone mortar. Then, when they had [412]
filled the mortar, the lady got her pestle and began to pound the kernels until they were made into a meal. Next, she rubbed it with her hands until it was worked into a paste. This she placed into an iron skillet, which was placed over a three-sided stone stove. Then she broke up some small chips of wood that she had ready, ignited them and moved the pan about over the heat until it began to warm up. She kept rubbing and kneading the meal with her hands in the skillet until it got quite warm—but not hot, for she used her hands for turning it in the pan.

Then, she lifted up the mass and put it into a round, [415]
solid, earthenware or stone receptacle about 12 inches in diameter, with the sides about two or two and a half inches high. She kneaded this with her fingers and knuckles firmly, much more firmly than one would in kneading dough for bread.

Then, a tablespoonful of water was poured over the meal and the massaging process was continued. It was explained to me that sometimes tea is used instead of water. If the pits are bitter pits from the wild fruit, plain water is used, but for sweet pits from the propagated apricots salt water is used.

The bitter pits are gathered from the trees that grow [222]
[373]

252 wild in various parts of the area. The oil rendered from
[222] these kernels is probably used only for lighting, because
[373] it is poisonous. Due to their heavy content of prussic
acid, a handful of them is considered deadly. In Niagara,
[762] if somebody wants to commit suicide, he jumps
over Niagara Falls; in Hunza, they eat a batch of wild
apricot kernels.

The kneading process is continued and the vessel is kept tilted so the oil runs down and forms a small pool. As the oil begins to form, the kneading becomes even more vigorous until every drop of oil possible is extracted. While the rendering of the oil may be hard on the knuckles, nothing could be simpler and the resulting product is probably the most healthful and finest fat product that human hands can produce.

[231] The pulp that remains after the oil[1] is extracted is
[302] fed to milk-giving goats, sheep or cows, and is often
used as a concoction or shampoo in which the Hunzans wash their heads. The oil of course is used in cooking, baking, frying, for lighting—and even for the hair.

[461] The good woman who performed the oil extracting task for me did not seem to be the least bit overburdened or taxed from this sort of arduous work. It probably would have been a hard day's work for a Western woman.

I would like to stress at this point that the heating process was not a cooking process in any sense of the word. Just a slight warming was all that was needed.

251 The apricot oil is never rendered and stored in casks
252 or otherwise, like many other people do with their oils.
They may make sufficient to last them a few days but not more. This is poured into an earthen vessel or a bottle, if available. When a further supply is required, the pits are cracked and they go through the entire process as outlined.

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[1] [i.e - oil from apricot seeds - ANALYST]

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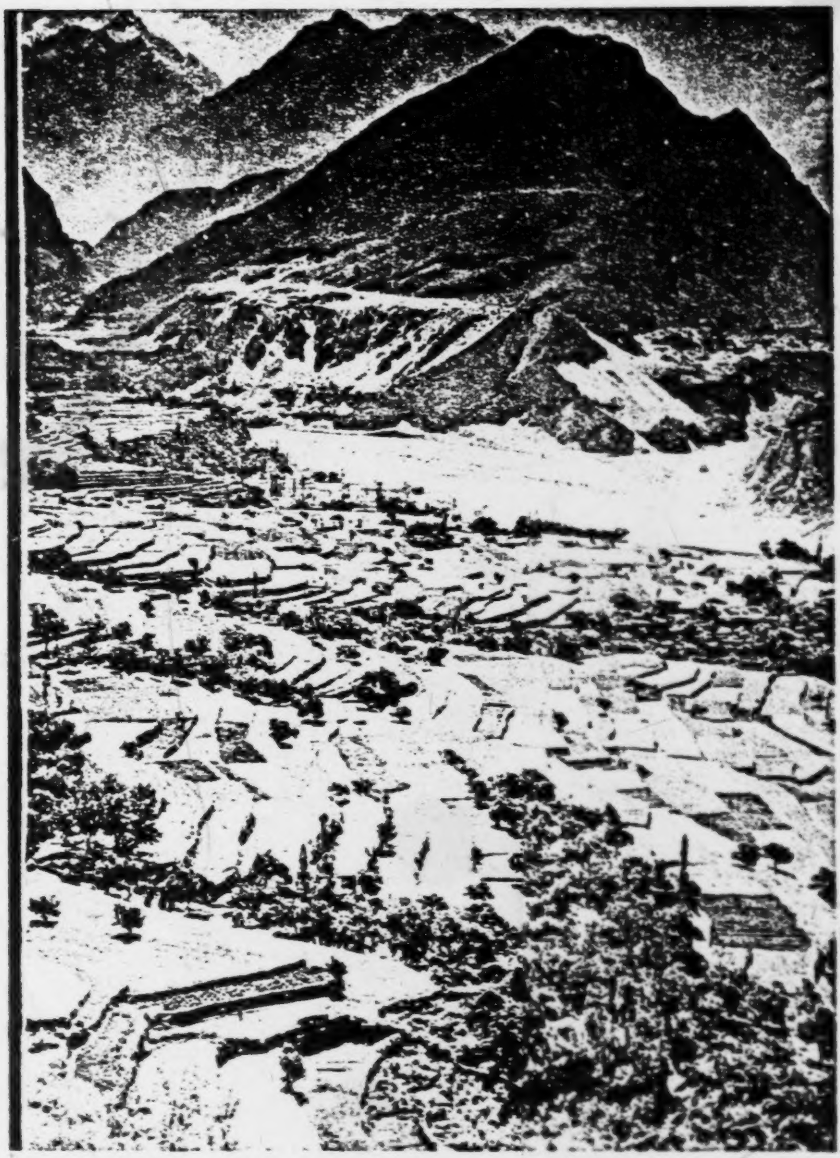

The largest area of land suitable for farming in Hunza—located near Baltit.

[facing p. 326-A]

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

311
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361
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Hunzan fields are small, and are worked with hand tools.

[p.326-B1]

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

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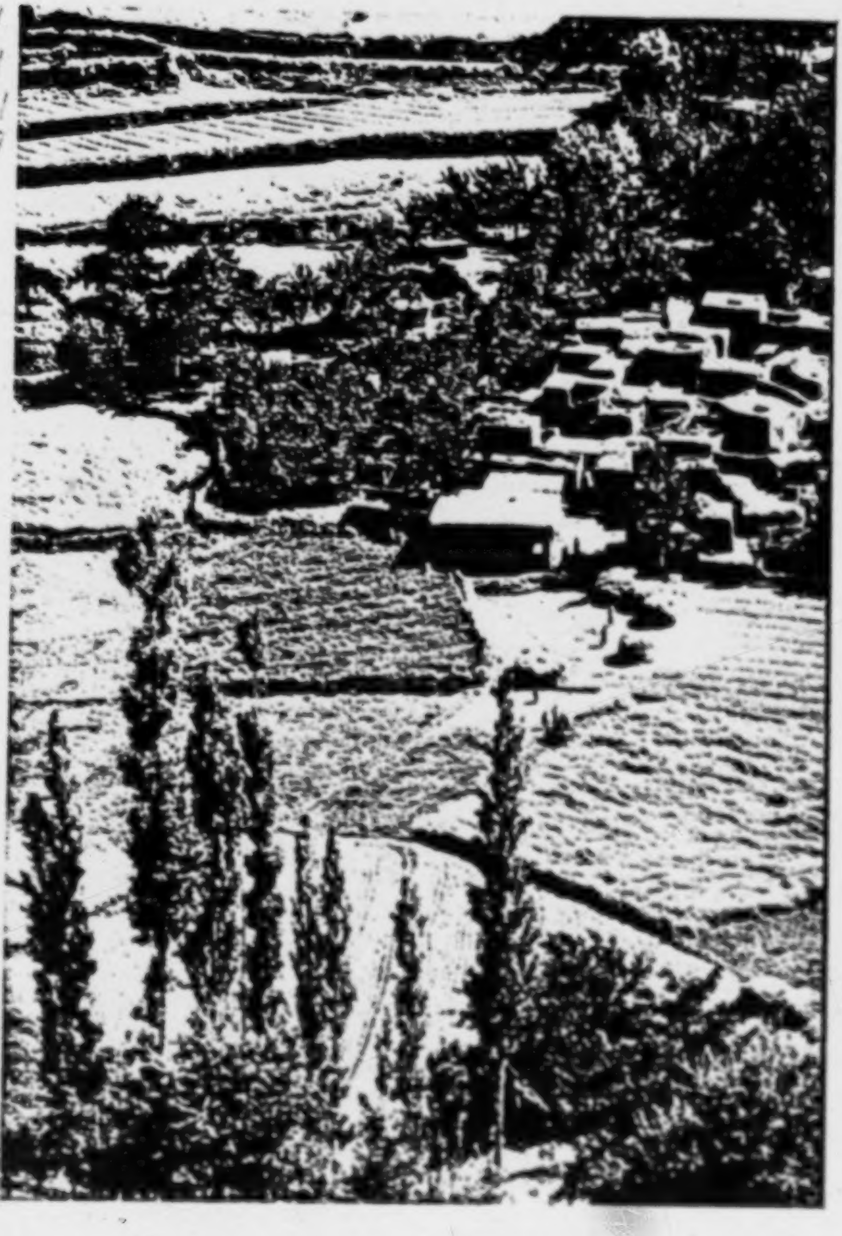

[p. 326-B2]

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Whether or not apricot oil contains any special qualities I am unable to say. Perhaps someone will do some research on it in the near future and perhaps we will learn that apricot oil is another of the reasons why the Hunzans keep their health.

But for the moment, contrast the way the Hunzans get their oil and the way the people of the Western world get theirs. I know of no oil that is offered for general sale in America that is not treated or rendered by a harsh chemical solvent. Nor do I know of any oil sold or that is generally procurable on which a color extractor or bleach is not used. There is no reason why we cannot have apricot oil in the West, but if we did have it, I'm afraid any or most of its good, health-giving effects would be lost, if a solvent or a bleaching agent were employed.

Yes, I do know that there are vegetable oils offered on the market that have been prepared by the expeller method, but such oils are seldom seen, are quite expensive and only the keenly health-minded people who know what they want will pay the price and look for them.

Maybe sunflower seed oil, corn oil or olive oil are every bit as good as apricot oil, but the *process*—therein lies the secret of health or disease. The most satisfactory method of rendering oil from grains or nuts is the simple natural cold press process, after which it is filtered.

The accent during the past few years has been markedly towards the vegetable oils against animal oils. Researchers seem to have proven without any fear of contradiction, that the vegetable oils are much less harmful or actually beneficial to the human system, whereas the animal oils are suspected as being prime contributors in most cases to arteriosclerosis and ultimately, heart disease.

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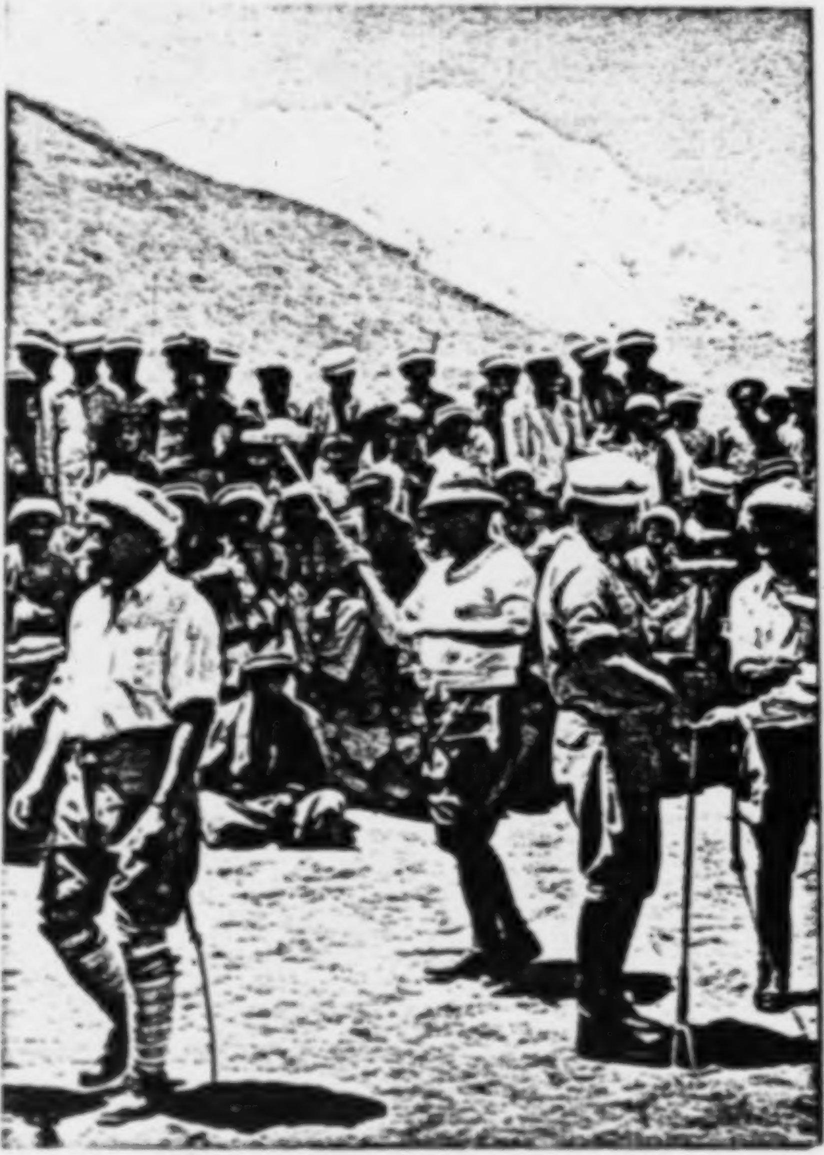

Choosing sides for a polo match. Rakaposhi is in the background.

[facing p. 327]

252 So now, almost every housewife is turning towards vegetable oils to prolong the life of her husband and give greater health to her family and herself. However, I suspect that the processing has rendered any benefits not only doubtful, but maybe has turned them into something that has a physically degenerative effect.

Again the people of Hunza seem to have won an easy victory over us in the matter of what oil to use by simply staying with nature, working with her and taking what she has to offer, rather than trying to beat her at her own game.

There is another aspect that I would like to point out at this time and that is that I believe, for the oil process, it would be better if stored stones or pits were used, rather than fresh ones. If fresh pits were used, there would be a much higher moisture content and therefore the oil would require much more working or kneading before it would be rendered.

I see no reason why apricot pits couldn't be stored for more than one year if kept in a comparatively cool, dry place. Thus, they would give their oil more readily, because only the water would be evaporated during the lapse of time.

A handful of apricot meats would be required to render about one ounce of oil.

CHAPTER 38

Crop Rotation--Harvesting

WHENEVER I TALKED to a farmer—and, of course, practically all people in Hunza are farmers—I asked what crops they grew and then asked how many years they had been growing wheat or potatoes or barley on a specific field. In every case the answer came back that some other crop different from the present one was raised there last year. I tracked this down carefully because I wanted to clearly establish whether or not they followed the rotating program in raising their food crops.

Even before setting foot in Hunza, I was certain that they could never have remained alive and in good health under such difficult conditions and with the limited available land, unless a rigid scheme of crop rotation was followed. Yet from what I actually saw on the scene, I reached the conclusion that this was easier said than done. It's all right to rotate crops where you have

242 lots of land and where, if necessary, you can allow some of it to lie fallow. But here they needed every bit of land they could get. It was actually a matter of life and death.

In a country where land is as scarce as it is in Hunza, there would be a very strong temptation against allowing land to lie fallow. I assure you that this technique is positively practiced. Then, too, there is a strong temptation to use a few pats of cow or yak dung for fuel during the cold winter nights. Yet, in most of Hunza, common sense and wisdom prevail and the excrement is used where it belongs—on the land.

I can see no hope that the land situation in Hunza will improve, but the very fact that it has continued to exist and flourish for over 1,000 years is ample proof that their way of life, their methods and means of agriculture, are right. It is only by practicing rigid, persevering methods of control and natural methods of agriculture that they have been able to survive.

With land so scarce one might be tempted to get away from crop rotation. But the people of Hunza are too wise to succumb to that type of thinking. They know that if crop rotation were not practiced rigorously, disease, sickness and death would soon follow. They know that no people anywhere in the world are "healthier than their soil."

History relates and offers proof of many civilizations who failed to follow the practices and principles of sound agriculture and to return to the land that which belonged to and came from the land. This practice invariably led to ruin and extermination. This selfsame horticultural technique is being practiced in many countries throughout the world today and the results will be the same—disastrous—as only time will prove.

No matter where I walked or went or rode in either

242

Hunza or Nagir, not once did I see a bit of organic material of any kind wasted or destroyed. The people made regular foraging trips to different parts of the country and always brought back for their land any grass or other organic material that was found and could be brought home.

[482]
[231]

They would walk many miles in search of grass or green growth of any kind. Regularly I saw men, women and boys carrying huge packs on their backs. It was a mass of green packed into a cloth and carried to their farm to be fed to the animals or distributed over the small fields.

Up until the present time chemical fertilizers have not invaded Hunza. Whether there is any connection between the splendid health of the Hunzans and the fact that they have never used commercial fertilizers, I am unable to state. But it is worth considering!

Remember, there are no forests, peat bogs or other sources of organic material like we have in most parts of Europe and America. Every bit of organic material that the Hunzan farmer uses or procures is got at the expense of hard work or difficult travel. So it is easy to see why they can afford to waste not one iota of this life-sustaining substance.

If you have ever traveled to Switzerland, you would probably be struck or amazed by the neat piles of manure that are built in front of most farm residences and there a man's prestige and intrinsic value are estimated by the size of his manure pile. Don't laugh—I'm not joking! I'm dead serious and I swear this is absolutely true! Wise, oh, very wise, are the Swiss!

In Hunza, unfortunately, manure piles are seldom if ever encountered because the manure is placed on their fields as soon as it is ready. I looked into countless animal stables but never once did I see a manure pile . . .

242 either there or anywhere else. Obviously it is placed directly on the fields or at least at definite short intervals.

Here the Hunzan system again showed some notable difference from the method practiced in the West. Practically all farmers in the West allow their manure to accumulate in piles or actually stack it in that manner. It is usually left there from one season to another at least and often longer. I've heard them refer to the older manure piles as well cured ones. I've always bemoaned this fact—yes, back as much as 20 years ago—because with every rain and with the snows in the winter, potent, rich, nutrient-ladened juices flowed off into the streams from my land and other lands. No one can deny that a fair part of the value of the manure is leached away forever.

In Hunza it is spread regularly on the land, between crops in the spring and summer. I distinctly saw many farms on which the manure had been distributed being plowed in. This is never done, to my knowledge, in the West. Therefore the Hunzan farmer does not lose any of his valuable, natural manures by leaching.

242 514 Because there is such a scarcity of organic materials, it is obvious that excrement must be used to the fullest extent. I looked, I gazed, I searched, I peered but nowhere did I see a sign of any human excrement being accumulated, saved or being used on the Hunzan farms. This mystified me.

In practically all parts of India and in some parts of Pakistan and perhaps in other Eastern countries, it is customary for the citizenry to stoop at the curb, right out in the middle of the street or sometimes beside a bush or planting of shrubs, and right there and then evacuate water or feces. No, this is not an exaggeration or a fairy tale, but the simple, unadulterated truth that is seldom told.

That people avoid discussing this unpleasant topic is 242
understandable; yet, by doing so, you and others who 514
have no opportunity of visiting these areas are often given an incorrect picture. Whereas, in Pakistan and India, this unpleasant business took place practically everywhere, it was with a genuine feeling of relief and thankfulness that I found in Hunza it is positively never practiced—at least, I never saw even a sign of any such thing taking place—but evidently human excrement is used there. It is buried and eventually finds its way to the fields.

It took quite a search to track down the ways and means and methods of using this night-soil. I know that it is used extensively in the East and for that matter, it is also used in Mexico and perhaps in other parts of the Western world. There is no reason why it shouldn't be used if proper methods of curing or mellowing are followed. After all is said and done, our septic tanks are only putting a natural principle to work, but the shame of it is that in most cases it is entirely wasted.

The most common method of using night-soil in Hunza was to place it in a deeply (as deep as the rocky terrain of Hunza would allow) dug pit, which was carefully kept covered, and eventually, a year or two later, it was distributed over the fields.

Harvesting a crop of grain in Hunza is very much 243
unlike our Western methods. They do not cut their grain but each wheat plant, or other grain, is pulled out individually, root and all, by hand. Then it is laid in neat bundles on the ground. When the harvesting or grain pulling process is complete, the roots are separated from the stalks by being cut or chopped off in bundles.

CHAPTER 39

Oh, Happy, Happy Day!

000 WHAT CONSTITUTES a Hunzan's day?

If anyone were to ask you to describe a normal, ordinary, usual American's day, you might be harder pressed than you think if you tried to outline it clearly and distinctly. And the reasons are manifold. Seldom, if ever, are two days identical.

For .example, a city man may assume that the farmer's day is all cut and dried and fixed and that he follows a regular routine from the moment he arises until he goes to bed that night. If you were to ask a farmer about a city man's day, he would just casually assume that a definite pattern were followed from the time he arose, shaved, brushed his teeth, had his breakfast and caught the trolley or took the car to his business . . . then a period off for lunch and perhaps a coffee break . . . then he'd put in some more time till 5 o'clock came round and then back home he'd go again . . . have his evening meal, watch TV and then to bed. 500

While this may all sound very good and very logical and fit into what we believe is a pattern, the average day is really unlike what I have described here for either the city dweller or the farmer. The truth of the matter is that, as I said at the start, no two days are entirely alike.

The day of the week plays an important role. The weather contributes its variation. Then we all know full well that not even a minute is predictable. So how could anyone expect to give a clear-cut résumé of what any person's day consists?

That is somewhat the way I felt when I set out to 512
outline what a day would be like as lived by the average citizen of Hunza. The only thing that I can hope to set out is a pattern. It may have a few or even hundreds of variations but at least the general pattern will be clear. So here is what I believe to be the procedure of one day—an ordinary day—in the life of a Hunzan.

The people of Hunza are Mohammedans of the 512
Ismaili sect. They are in no way fanatical. In fact, the 788
Ismaili are probably the least religious of all Moham- [771]
medans. The call to prayer is at 3:30 in the morning. Only the more pious and devout attend the service at the mosque.

A good true religious Mohammedan prays 5 times a day and on each occasion the prayer will last up to one hour, but through my entire travels through both Nagir and Hunza I saw very few instances where they took time off to pray during the day except on religious holidays or festivals. But, as I mentioned, prayer starts at 3:30 A.M. and I didn't have occasion to see them in action. Those who are devout usually pray from 3:30 to 4:30 and then go have their breakfast and so to the fields.

512 The breakfast, most meager by our standards, con-
262 sists of a bowl of fresh or boiled apricots with chapatties.
264 This is sufficient to keep the family working in the fields or doing other household and farm chores until 10 o'clock.

Then lunch is served and it is made up of fresh or boiled vegetables, dried apricots and chapatties. The men get two chapatties for this meal, whereas the women and children are restricted to one chapatty. Then off again to their duties—invariably on the land.

The midday meal is usually taken between 1 and 2 o'clock and in the summer this would mean, during the hottest part of the day. For this meal dried apricots, rubbed with the hands in water to form a soup, constitute the main course. A bowl or cupful of this gruel is drunk. This is the procedure during the months when fresh apricots from the trees are not available. During the period from late spring until autumn, fresh apricots are always available and these are used instead of the dried ones.

The dinner hour usually reigns from 5 to 7 o'clock. For this meal more food than for the other meals is used and consumed. Vegetables, either or both boiled and raw, are eaten along with any one of the fruits like plums, peaches, pears, apples or apricots—then always chapatties.

If I haven't made it clear before, chapatties are the bread that is used almost exclusively throughout Pakistan and India. These are flat unleavened sheets of bread made from whole wheat—stone ground. They are the Indian "staff of life."

252 Cooking and preparation of meals as we know it in
262 the average home in America is definitely not part of the Hunzan way of life. Whereas in our way of life most foods are prepared by boiling, frying, baking,

roasting or broiling, in Hunza most of the foods are 252
eaten raw or lightly cooked. 262

To me, at least, the reason was plain and clear . . .
they have little or no fuel. Coal is unknown, wood ex- 372
tremely hard to get . . . they have to go a long way to 313
find a bit of forest or woodland. I saw practically none
in the Hunza area. In another area I visited—Punial—
one could see a few trees and copses that represented
their woodlands. But timber suitable for firewood was
not within reach of the people of Hunza. The bit of
wood they did get would most likely come from an apri-
cot or other fruit tree that had outlived its usefulness.

One of the most important reasons that apricots have 245
become such an important part in the Hunzan diet is 262
the fact that, by having found or created early, mid-
season and late varieties, the Hunzan season for apricots
extends two full months. This is a most vital considera-
tion and is well worth remembering.

The staple oil or fat of the people is apricot oil. Ghee 262
is used regularly, but butter can only be afforded and
used on special occasions.

During the entire summer seldom, if ever, is meat
served or seen on an average Hunzan's table, but during
the three hard winter months (December, January and
February) meat or chicken is sometimes used, if avail-
able (which is seldom). Even then, it is used only by [556]
the more prosperous or wealthy people. The poorer [231]
people can't afford to kill their cattle and use them for
beef except on special occasions or religious holidays.

When I say the poorer people, I should qualify this 565
statement, for there are no class distinctions whatsoever 423
in Hunza. However, there are those families who own 556
but one acre of land and there are those who own 10
acres. Therefore it is to be expected that there would
be a difference in their living standards.

262 A farmer who owned and worked 10 acres of workable
556 land might be able to afford to slaughter a sheep,
231 a goat or a bullock once a year. Yet this luxury could
not be dreamed of by the farmer with but one acre.

273 Also, while winter lasts, a glass of wine made from
245 Hunzan grapes is enjoyed occasionally . . . but chiefly
by the male head of the household.

415 Knives, forks and spoons as are used in the West are
[412] not seen in the average Hunzan home and even earthenware
plates are rare. But cups and earthenware bowls
are to be found in most homes. Wooden bowls fashioned
out of walnut by the wood-turner of the village
are also used in many homes.

352 The rooms are quite bare in most homes. Furniture
is a luxury and a rarity. In the homes there are found
usually a chest, a chair or a couch and a table. Shelves
to hold dishes are seen in most every home. Occasionally,
a dresser or cabinet can be found. The floor in an
average Hunzan home is an earthen one with a large
354 square hole in the center for the fire. Then, of course,
there is a large square hole in the roof to allow the
smoke to leave and to allow light to enter, for there
are no glass windows. This is fully open in the summer
but during the colder winter days the hole is kept
164 partly or almost closed. This is the chief contributor
to the eye troubles which affect many people in Hunza,
as mentioned elsewhere in this book.

439 At one time little or no money ever entered Hunza
and the meager trade that they did do with passing
437 caravans was by means of barter. The caravans coming
through from China would bring cooking utensils, cloth,
silk, tea and other commodities. For these, the people
of Hunza would trade some of their crops or would
work as coolies, porters or bearers.

000 During the past few years a bit of money has come

During the past few years a bit of money has come 436
into Hunza. At the time I was there, there were four 177
expeditions doing mountain and glacier climbing—as 464
well as investigations and research, not in Hunza, but in the vicinity. There were groups from Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland and Germany. In each and every case these expeditions would require bearers, guides, horses and pack animals. These would be recruited from among the Nagirwals and Hunzans and they would be paid in Pakistan rupees. I wish to emphasize that this has only taken place during the past few years. Prior to this period expeditions in this area were extremely rare.

While today money does make its appearance, it is 436
still comparatively scarce. The Mir believes that the 177
coming of money, modernization, and civilization as 643
we know it will only harm his people and he seeks to prevent this, if possible. It is my sincere and humble conviction that the Mir is honest and thinking of his people in his endeavors.

"There is no doubt that the people of Hunza know 461
and enjoy the true thrill of leisure." When I mentioned this to my staff, I was quickly brought to bay by one of my more astute employees who said, "How can that be when they are occupied from dawn till dusk?"

I was caught off balance and I had to reflect a moment and when I reflected, the picture was clear to me. Would a man who has never worked understand what is meant by a holiday? Would the average individual who spends his working days sitting at a desk checking figures, making phone calls and chatting with visitors, understand what leisure is? I contend that in order to know the true joy of leisure one must work and the harder one works, the greater is the enjoyment found in utter relaxation.

Can a man know leisure when after his day's work is

461 done and he turns on his television set, he is bombarded with commercials that seek to hypnotize his brain by making him believe he needs those products, when in reality he needs them like a hole in the head? Can a man know the meaning of true leisure when his head is throbbing with the bills he must meet on the morrow, the food he must buy and the clothing he must procure for his family, for which in many cases ready money is not available? Can a man who is harassed by and has pressing about him a hundred problems that must be reckoned with, find leisure or peace by escaping to the country for a weekend or by taking to drink?

Of course not! True relaxation and leisure are as far away from him as the moon!

Therefore, when I say that the people of Hunza know and enjoy the true thrill of leisure, I mean every [512] word of it sincerely. While they rise at 3.30 or 4 o'clock in the morning, they go to bed between 7 and 8, and in the winter time even earlier, if there is no celebration or dancing in the village. They are without doubt the most industrious people that I have met—especially in the East. Laziness is positively foreign to Hunza!

[481] Wherever I went I noticed that the Hunzans had ample time to talk and chat, and seldom did they appear to be in a hurry although whenever they walked, their walk was brisk—much more so than the average Western gait. In fact, this is one of their most recognizable and admired traits.

571 Lest anyone should get the impression that life in Hunza is dull, let me clearly emphasize that there is great fellowship between families and the selfsame group-gathering that we know of in our way of life is also practiced and followed by the people of Hunza. [796] Further, religious gatherings are quite frequent and play an important role in the social life of the people.

CHAPTER 40

Amusements

Music In Hunza has been cultivated to a greater 533 degree than many or most other arts and crafts. It is entirely different from the European or Western style of music. Authorities claim that the music of Hunza can be likened to that of the medieval European music.

It is interesting to note that a people so remotely placed away in a small aerie in the mountains, are so fond of music and they have their own types and kinds of instruments which are played by masters at the art.

In Hunza music is not purely for entertainment It is the essential ritual at all social functions and when the Mir returns from his visits to Altit and other parts of the country, he is greeted by the band playing music specifically prepared and used for such gala functions. Of course at the beginning of every polo match the [526] band plays and plays and plays and continues playing till the end of the match. At every festival music is an

533 important part of the proceedings.

533 They have their big feast day just before harvest
535 time and it takes place in the month of Ramadan. At
this festival, the musicians set things in motion by
527 starting very early in the morning, and the entire band joins in the sound and the fury. This is followed by dancing and they dance continually, though the same tune is being played over and over and over again in utter monotony. The musicians sit on the floor and make music without pausing, while the dancing goes on in the same way. There are no intermissions or stops.

[643] At this feast the Mir sits on a raised platform in full
[292] regalia. He wears a hat made of Persian lamb, the type of hat you've seen policemen wear in the cold climates in the wintertime.

562 The men invariably dance with their faces turned
[535] towards the Mir. No, the women do not dance, strange to relate. They are merely onlookers. They take no part in any of the social functions or in sport or entertainment. Such Hunzan activities are marked by the distinct absence of women. The Mohammedan religion does not allow women to take part in the social life of the community. This, as far as I can ascertain, has no counterpart in any other religion on earth.

Further, women have no rights or privileges.

After learning of these restrictions by the Mohammedan faith, I felt that there would be no mass migration on the part of the women of the West to Hunza.

535 The harvest dance is very similar to what might be
292 termed a victory dance or a great celebration. The most colorful and interesting dances are the sword dances. The men wear gaily colored costumes that are really very attractive. Their costumes are densely figured and brocaded and the heavy Chinese silks are used as the material. The swords and shields are handmade.

The dancers follow the music and keep time with it. The onlookers, in many cases, keep rhythm with their feet. The dancing and music go on until most of the spectators and the participants eventually leave. 535

One of their most useful instruments is known as a sitar. It is a wooden stringed instrument very much like our mandolin. Then there is the rebab. It is a much larger stringed instrument and is evidently identical with the Indian's rebab. Then they have their wind instruments, too. The first is the surnai. It is a big clarinet with an unusual, remarkable intensity of sound. Another unusual instrument is the tutek which is but a simple small wooden flute. The third type of wind instrument is the gabi which is a very long transverse flute. Its special use is in plays or music that includes fairies and is used chiefly for the fairies' incantation. Its music is exceedingly sweet sounding and very high pitched. And last but not least are the many kinds of drums. They come in all sizes from tiny ones that can be worn around the neck by a young boy to the big bass boom-boom. 534

Like all oriental forms of music, the Hunzan band seems to capture the true style so well known to the East . . . pleasing, high pitched sounds but with very little variation. After a little while all of the sounds seem the same and appear to be one repetition after another—most monotonous! 533

During the summer there is not much social life in the evenings because the people are tired. They work hard all day. But in the winter there is regular dancing and meetings with friends. 517

I would gather that the people of Hunza don't need sports too badly because life and living in Hunza compels the individual to be active. Thus, he doesn't have to indulge in sports to get exercise. 526

526
481 I do know, however, that tennis is played in Hunza because the Mir has a tennis court in an area around the garden. I also know that swimming is practiced because I saw a swimming pool at the Mir's summer home at Altit.

It was July when I was in Hunza and not one single person did I see swimming in either the Gilgit or Hunza Rivers or, for that matter, in any of the nullahs or creeks we passed.

I will admit that we had our feet soaked in most of them—some deliberately when resting and others in crossing, chiefly on foot because I didn't trust my horse. He has four slender legs with any of which he can get into trouble. I have only two to watch and worry over and they are sturdy and stocky, of the "Pict" type.

133
526 It would take a mighty good man or boy to swim in the nullahs in Hunza or the surrounding area: first, because the icy waters of the rivers or nullahs would freeze you to death in no time flat. The water, winter and summer, never gets much higher than the freezing point and I doubt if any human being or even these human polar bears could stand water like that. Besides, there are no clear calm patches that are without a devastating current.

From scrutinizing the area, I doubt very much if there are very many places along the entire reaches of the Hunza River that can be forded, even with mighty good animals, capable of swimming, at least during the spring and summer. I know of one well prepared expedition that tried to cross one of these rivers and came to grief.

526 Polo is the national game or sport of Hunza and of practically all the principalities in that area . . . and, brother, it is a wild and woolly game as played by these

hardy, mountaineering people. 526

Some authorities would have us believe that polo as a game had its origin in Tibet, which you can readily see is only a short hop from Hunza. Actually it is right on the border of what was properly old Tibet, but which the Chinese prefer to call Sinkiang. It is also known as Chinese Turkestan. 526 177

The word polo is actually a Tibetan word describing or meaning "root of the willow tree," for it was from the dried stumps of the willow tree that polo balls were originally made. The willow wood, from my intimate knowledge of the tree and the wood, would give quite a bit of bounce if made into a ball and that is exactly what was required.

From the best sources that I am able to dig into and locate, it seems that the modern game of polo as we know it throughout the West, originated in Persia. From there it found its way into Turkey and then it was adopted in India, Tibet, China and Japan. In 1869 the British saw it played in the Turkestan-Hunza regions and began to play it in India, where it became the favorite sport of the British army officers. That was well over 100 years ago. In 1869 it was also introduced into England where it caught on very quickly. Then it made its entrance into the United States in 1876.

Here is a strange fact. While many of the characteristics of the game have changed, the selfsame old willow ball is still used and one of the men still gallops down the center of the polo field and strikes the ball off into play. In the Western world it is the umpire who does this. In Hunza, it's still the Mir or some other distinguished personality. [643]

If any of you have had the opportunity of seeing a polo game in action—that is, Western polo—you might even then get the impression that it is a rough, some-

526 what dangerous game. But if you saw the selfsame
177 sport played without an umpire, and only a score
keeper, in Hunza, you'd probably think it the most
bloodthirsty game in creation. And who am I to say
it is or isn't!

Of course, the British changed the rules and regulations somewhat along the line of the Marquis of Queensbury, and a good thing, too, for our men aren't quite as tough as the Hunzans.

526 Practically every village in Hunza has a polo team
628 and matches are being arranged continually . . . and
the day of a match is really a red letter day for that
village. The villagers may not have too much room for
orchards and other farming, but they do have polo
[311] fields. Invariably the best and flattest piece of land in
the area is used as a polo field. So you see, sport, for
[367] sport's sake, ranks high among the Hunzans and the
Nagirwals as well.

526 The polo field at Baltit sits just below the old castle
367 on the precipice and rather close to the school and the
mosque . . . a sort of towering civic square, if it might
be called that. A well-maintained low stone wall sur-
[417] rounds the polo field.

While putting in my attendance at the polo field this day, I recalled that a few days previous I had followed a trail that led down from a cleft in this polo field to visit some of the Hunzan farms.

Above the raised wall, in places, are chairs and seating spaces for the spectators.

526 Everybody goes to the polo matches. And why not?
[562] To these affairs even the women go. And even though
[291] their clothes be drab their red, skillfully embroidered
Hunzan hats make the spectacle glow with splendor
and color.

[533] The Hunzan band is there to do the honors and

they play from the time the game starts until it finishes. 526
I don't know who would be more tired . . . the musi- [533]
cians, the polo players or the excited, active, shouting
spectators.

I paced off the field and counted 90 good paces [367]
long and 40 wide. This would make it approximately
270 x 120 feet. This is quite a bit smaller in size than
the modern polo field which is 300 x 200 feet, and
would tend to make the Hunzan sport more hazardous
and nerve-racking.

Instead of goal posts they use two large white stones at either end.

The game was started into action by the Mir, in [643]
this case, who started off at the further end at a gallop.
As he reached the center, he threw the ball high into
the air and as it came down he clobbered it and the
game—or the mad scramble—was on!

There are 6 players on each team and as the ball is pummeled from one place to another, the screams of the spectators and the players are more frenzied than those heard at a baseball game.

There are no rules—except that the team who scores 9 goals first is the winner, and the game doesn't stop until one of the teams has scored 9 goals. They don't have rest periods; they don't change horses or men; there are no penalties and no fouls. So you can just imagine the carryings-on.

If the ball is struck or bounces off the wall and is caught by one of the players, this permits him to ride through the goal posts and deposit the ball and score a goal . . . if the opposition will let him! Any means can be and usually are undertaken to prevent him from reaching the goal to which he is entitled to proceed. If they're bold enough and strong enough, they can even pull him from his mount.

526 They seldom ever score 9 goals in less than an hour
and many times a game will last half a day. And
[533] through all this gleeful yelling and shouting—everybody seems to scream like mad—the band is playing its martial tunes.

When a player scores a goal, he proceeds to pick up the ball and follow the same procedure as the Mir did when he started the action. He races madly down the field, screaming and yelling at the top of his lungs. With the scoring of every goal they change ends; that is, what was the first team's goal now becomes their opponent's goal.

[164] From Gilgit to Altit, whenever I saw someone who had a broken nose or some other definite sign of body injury, I would know even before inquiring, that it was gained in honor on the polo field.

[535] When at last one of the teams scored 9 goals and the game was finished, both teams took part in a dance. The winning team dances first and when they have completed their dance, the losing team do their stint. How they could have the strength and energy required to dance, after hours of unrelenting top-pitch physical activity is more than any Westerner can understand.

The horsemanship displayed at the polo matches beggars that seen at western rodeos. In fact, a Hunzan polo game makes the wildest of rodeos seem almost tame. When it comes to horsemanship, you'd have to go a long way to get anyone to beat these tough, hardy mountaineers.

[164] So furious was the game that I inquired if anyone was ever killed playing polo. The Mir replied that he had never heard of any fatalities from a polo game, but that on many occasions a player was incapacitated. I
[743] felt that it would be a good idea if they could build their polo fields close to the hospital at Aliabad!

In discussing the Hunzan game of polo with some 526
friends, when they heard me mention the fact that the 311
best and largest piece of flat land was used for a polo field, they said, "Now, John, this is very contradictory. You claim they are intelligent people and every bit of arable land is needed and used for cultivation and now you tell me that the best piece of land and the largest level space is used for a polo field!"

My reply was, "What I've told you is absolutely true, but sometimes there are considerations involved which neither you nor I nor others in the Western world
understand. For example, could we ever explain to the 000
people of Hunza why we rush, swish, hurry and risk our necks driving down the highways, actually risking life and limb—not only our own, but countless others—only to get to our destination . . . and there do nothing!

"Or there is another example that may be even better. A man in America strives all his life to achieve the means of acquiring a home with all modern conveniences and comforts, including every electrically operated appliance or gadget devised to save time and effort. Then when this victory is achieved, he tries to get enough money to buy a summer cottage way up north. There he parks his family for the summer. Then over every weekend he drives hundreds of miles to get there and when he gets there what has he got? Outdoor plumbing, no hot water, no garbage disposal, no electricity—using a lamp or even a candle for light and carrying every bucket of water in from the lake or the creek. You just try to explain that to a Hunzan. There is no more rhyme and reason in one than there is in the other. But who am I to judge?"

It is a positive fact that the men in Hunza do beat 593
their wives. I checked and double checked on this 683
rather important question. The Mir told me he knew

593 of only one case where a man excessively and unjustly
683 administered thrashings on his spouse. In all other in-
stances the men are not punished or sent to prison for
it. If a wife doesn't do as her husband commands, he
beats her. If she were too generous in giving away her
husband's property to her parents, he would also beat
837 her. If she is unfaithful to him and he catches her, he
has a right to kill both her and her seducer.

This seems to have an excellent effect in maintain-
000 ing a high standard of loyalty. I am not sure as to how
the people of the West will regard the people of Hunza
for the light I have shed here, but whatever your
judgment and opinion, I have laid the facts before you.

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Hunza

CHAPTER 41

Cleanliness

ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS I have read and heard reports that the Hunzan homes are scrupulously clean. To that I will not subscribe. I just can't go along with any such assertion. 356 114

I peeked into, looked over at and viewed hundreds of the homes in Nagir on the trek and I also had a chance to see into many of the homes in Hunza and there isn't any question about it—the Hunzan homes are cleaner, tidier and have fewer odors (or none at all) than the others of this same area. But to say that they are scrupulously clean or that you could eat off the floor is, to my mode of thought, a gross exaggeration.

Obviously, the places the other writers saw were very clean and tidy. But, to me anyway, it is clear that the owners were notified in advance that they would have visitors.

Being curious and nosy by habit and turn of mind, I 356 123

/29 managed to peer into a few of the places and noticed
356 that they weren't as spic and span as some people say they are. In fact, we were taken through one home on a tour. We visited their downstairs apartment and then climbed the ladder to visit the upstairs one. I will admit and am in complete agreement with the other writers, that the place was scrupulously clean, swept and neat.

But—and this is important, so follow me—I had stuck my head and eyes into that selfsame home the day before, probably unknown to my guide, and had seen the condition that this same house was in then. While it was not filthy, nor could I even say dirty, it certainly was not in the same immaculate condition that it was in now, since this time the people were advised that we were coming.

[515] So let it be said and accepted that the Hunzans are much cleaner than the Nagirwals and are generally, by and large, a clean, wholesome people, both in body and in home.

I have long ago accepted the clear-cut situation that hygiene and cleanliness are strictly matters of habit, custom and necessity and these factors vary from country to country. For example, the standard of cleanliness in Switzerland is quite different to that of neighboring France. And in Italy, especially in the southern part, it bears no resemblance to that practiced in either France or Switzerland. Then in England the standard changes again and when you get to America, well, there again it is so different that one would believe it was a different world.

356 Undoubtedly, the people of Hunza in their hygienic habits are far above those of India or Pakistan. I am here referring to the mass level, of course. Then, too, the Hunzan habits were far better than those in Italy.

The house of the average Hunzan farmer was not quite as good as the average European house. In my opinion, Hunzan cleanliness is as good as is desirable when all matters are considered. 356

Cleanliness as we know it in the West is neither desirable nor is it a necessity in a country like Hunza. To begin with, they have more important duties to perform than doing a lot of unnecessary housekeeping. Usually in the West, the man earns the wherewithal to sustain the home and the woman looks after the cooking, housekeeping and the rearing of the children. In Hunza the father, the mother and the children, as soon as they are old enough to know what to do, take part in the work. You see, it is practically a full time job for the entire family during the spring and summer to procure sufficient food to last throughout the year. 356 462

Therefore it is neither desirable nor necessary for a Hunzan wife to have a lot of furniture and other things that would require work and attention in her home.

If you are trying to compare the cleanliness of the average American city or town person's home with that of the Hunzan homes, then you are miles and miles away from reality, because very, very few people of the world—especially those in the more or less underprivileged countries or in remote districts—live in homes that are in any way comparable to the average city home in America. 356

In the locality where I live, the Niagara District, the choicest locations along the lake front are selected for subdivision sites and beautiful spacious homes with fine grounds are created. That may be all well and good in America, where rich arable land is readily available, but in Hunza, remember, every bit of land that they own and use for growing their life-giving crops has to be torn from the rocks of the mountain- 361

361 sides. Few, if any, Hunza homes are ever built where the land can be tilled. Usually the site that is selected for a home is part of a rocky promontory or some other location where the land could not be used for crops. They just can't afford to use a piece of tillable soil for a homesite.

342 The houses or homes are usually built of stones or rocks. No cement or any other binding compound is used. Yet the homes seem sturdy enough to stand most anything. I also saw some that were built of clay.

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231 The lower floor of the Hunzan house is usually divided into two sections. One section has either no roof over it or just a part roof or covering and there is an opening in the wall, but no door. This is where the animals are kept. The Hunzan pasture and forage supply doesn't allow for the larger beasts. The cattle of Hunza are the diminutive kind, bred and selected for their dwarfishness, so that they will require less feeding, but still yield an abundant udderful of rich milk. This applies to goats, sheep and cows. The partial covering over the courtyard is so that the animals will have some form of protection overhead.

342 Then beside this is the house proper, probably half again as large . . . maybe 12 or 14 feet square.

The Hunzan farmer steps from his home into the stable, so to speak. This, of course, would horrify the people of America but it is not to be regarded as a sort of calamity, as utter degradation, or as a matter of filth and ill health, because this system is practiced in most other parts of the world even at the present time.

231
775 The Hunzans, being Mohammedans, do not raise pigs. Therefore they don't have the conditions that pigs would create.

356 I'm sure that I visited many of these courtyards and

I don't think I was struck by any unpleasant or bad odors. No doubt you would assume that being a farmer, the excrement of animals wouldn't offend me and in saying that you'd be very, very right, but even with a city man's view, I don't think you would have found the Hunzan barnyards smelly or dirty. 356

The roof of the living quarters is just high enough so that a tall man can stand up in it without bumping his head. The Hunzan roofs usually have heavy timbers strung across—at least 3 inches thick and placed about 12 inches apart. They have to be that thick and heavy because on top of this is laid earth. Practically every home has an earthen roof. The floor, too, is of hard earth that has been pounded through years of use, until it is a good sound firm floor that can be readily swept and kept clean. 342

Apart from the Mir's palace, every other home that I visited in Hunza and in Nagir had earthen floors. Now naturally one wouldn't expect an earthen floor to be spic and span or shine and glisten the way a good hardwood floor can be made to shine and glisten. These earthen or clay floors can be made smooth and even be polished, and it is actually done.

Often the room is divided off to allow for a storage room, where the dried apricot stones and other fruits and vegetables are kept for winter use. [251]

In the center of the room a hole is dug and often stones are laid at the bottom. Here the fire is laid and this is how they keep warm during the winter and where they do their cooking. Above is a hole about 18 inches square to allow the smoke to escape. The people sleep on the floor within warming distance of the fire. Beds in the average Hunzan homes are unknown, but they have bed rolls or other cloth contraptions to make the floor softer. Some of the wealthier or well-to-do [354] 513 352 352

352 Hunzans have charpoys. Most homes have a chest, or two or three or more, in which they store and keep their belongings. The chests are used to sit on and perhaps eat off. The Hunzan home we visited had a table also.

513 286 Every Hunzan home has blankets for covering during the winter and these blankets are made of homespun wool which is carded, loomed and woven by the villagers. They are equal in weight and warmth to the best blankets that are made in the West. There is no danger of the blankets not being 100 per cent wool, because wool they can get from the sheep or yak's backs.

342 Practically every Hunzan home has an upstairs, too, and this is where the family lives during the summer. It is related that each spring on the 21st of March the family moves upstairs. When there are 4 or 5 members in the family the upstairs is usually divided into two sections or rooms, leaving an open balcony in the center.

342 512 The usual Hunzan home is a place to shelter the family against storms, rain, cold and snow. It is not used nearly as much for social intercourse as it is in the West. Therefore, they don't spend as much of their time in the homes. Practically all daylight hours during spring, summer and fall are spent in the fields.

164 Some authorities attribute the good health of the Hunzans to the fact that most of their time is spent out in the open air and sunlight. Could it be that we in the West spend too much of our time inside our comfortable homes and not sufficient outside in the glorious outdoors? This is something worthy of thought and study.

Considering the heights, the ledges, the precipices and steep inclines that are found throughout this country, it is remarkable that there are few cases of injury like broken or fractured limbs, serious accidents due to falling and such. But you must remember that from infancy, children are trained and learn how to stay aloft. Heights offer no terror for any Hunzan— 164 man, woman or child. I think if a Hunzan suffered injury because of a fall from a height, he would be ashamed and embarrassed, but let me admit that they do have falls and broken limbs, too. I found this out [752] when I met Hunzans who were expert bone-setters.

I have to admit that generally speaking the Hunzans' 291 clothes are nondescript. However, I was strongly attracted to the Hunza hat which is best described as a rolled, sausage brimmed, soft white woolen covering. But it is really and truly an ingenious contraption. It is made of native homespun wool, white or creamy in color and mighty good wool, it is, in my opinion.

These hats are worn summer and winter by the boys and men. I tried them and found that they did keep out the summer heat. Wherever I met the boys and men of Hunza they always wore these hats. In the winter they can be rolled down to cover not only their ears but their faces and necks as well. I attest that it is a valuable and completely satisfactory headpiece. I thought they were quite attractive and enhanced the handsomest of the Hunzan men.

They have the choga which is a long flowing cloak worn by both men and women during the winter. This cloak is made of the same grey homespun wool and is never dyed but its creamy color is attractive and pleasing to the eye. Evidently this choga is quite [173] similar to the toga worn by the ancient Romans. Who knows? Maybe some of Alexander's men or Alexander himself brought a toga with him from his homeland when he came to the East.

Apart from the attractive, useful, comfortable, Hunzan sausage-brimmed hat and choga, the best I can say for the rest of the clothes worn by the people of Hunza is that they are utilitarian.

CHAPTER 42

Government

212 I DON'T KNOW whether to describe the mode of gov-
671 ernment of Hunza as being complex or simple. The
[197] language of the people of Hunza is Burushaski and
this language is totally unwritten. Therefore, they have
no written code of laws.

114 The first dictionary of the Burushaski language was written by Colonel David Lorimer in 1935 and at the present time Doctor Hermann Berger, a German language professor, a specialist in Sanskrit, is seeking to write another and perhaps a more thorough and complete dictionary of that language.

I recall in Chalt, while I was enjoying the company of Professor Berger, he showed me a set of books that was published in Norway in 1935. They were Colonel David Lorimer's dictionary of the Burushaski language.

In my estimation Dr. Berger's work should be a masterpiece, because never in my life have I seen any

human being take to a task so assiduously and with so 114
much profound love and feeling. I don't know when it's
going to be published or by whom, but I'll certainly
make sure to get a set or a copy of the volumes, even
if they are printed in German.

The word "Burushaski" is pronounced almost as it 104
is written, except there is a "u" sound in the last 197
syllable rather than an "a" sound. My reaction was to
spell the word "uski" and all through the writing of
my manuscript that was the way I spelled it, but as I
found every other source, with one exception besides
myself, spelled it "aski" I had to admit defeat and also
use that spelling. The spelling of "uski" was used by
the Mir and his grandfather in his book. I still think
it sounds like "uski" rather than "aski". Dr. Berger
agreed with me that it did sound like "uski" but he
felt that for the sake of uniformity, it would be better
if I, too, used the "aski".

Nevertheless, though their code of laws remains unwritten, 671
justice does not seem to suffer. The people of
Hunza are well acquainted with the laws in vogue. I
believe it was Napoleon who said that a nation that has
many laws has a lawless people. Perhaps because the
Hunzans do not have many laws, they are law-abiding.

Until the partition of Pakistan from India, Hunza 648
was a part of India or, at least, it was definitely included
on the map as Indian territory. But there is nothing in
Hunza to indicate that they obeyed, owed or acknowledged
sovereignty to India.

The Mir was and is the absolute ruler. He supposedly 643
has the power of life and death over all his subjects. I 175
know this power has never been used or abused by the [642]
present Mir, who came to the throne in 1945 at the
death of his father who ruled but 8 years. Very little
is said or recorded about his father's tenure in office.

643 Therefore, I assume that it was an unimportant or
175 uneventful period or, maybe for other reasons, they
don't want to say very much about it. However, his grandfather, Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, has been famed both in fact and fiction and was well educated.
[538] He left an autobiography, and I am the owner of a copy of it, which was given to me by the present Mir.

648 Today Hunza is a part of Pakistan but again, I could
177 see no Pakistani influence in the country, although
167 quite a few of the Hunzan citizens serve in the Pakistani army. But when the Hunzan men and boys return on furlough or after finishing their term of service in the Pakistani army, they take off the uniform and dress in typical Hunzan garb.

643 The Mir is still the absolute monarch of the country.
648 Just what part the Pakistani government takes in his government I do not know, but to all intents and purposes, Hunza is ruled and governed by the Mir.

648 From the most reliable sources that I could contact
642 and glean information from, I learned that Hunza is even today considered an independent state. Hunza and Nagir, its neighbor on the other side of the Hunza River, are said to be the only two remaining independent states in Pakistan, in spite of the fact that, by agreement, the Pakistani government looks after and takes charge of their foreign policy.

436 Apart from the fact that they use the Pakistani ru-
177 pee, and even then only a few of them appear, there seems to be no other Pakistani influence in either Nagir or Hunza.

205 Pakistani postage is also used in Hunza. The mail is
[177] brought in and sorted twice a week. All of the Mir's letters that I have received bear Pakistani airmail postage and they are postmarked "Experimental P.O." I doubt if anyone but the Mir gets any mail, with the

exception of the doctor or visitors. There was a letter 205
from my office awaiting me when I reached the Mir's
palace. The Mir told me about it right after our first
greeting. He was understanding enough to realize I
would be happy to hear from home.

I guess many of the things about Hunza wouldn't 642
allow the country to come under the heading of a
democracy, but from what I saw of life and living in
Hunza, I assure you it is more of a democracy than any
other democracy in existence today.

Hunza has no policemen, no soldiers, no bureau- 692
cracy, no customs officers or immigration officers. They 643
do have the Mir who is the ruler and true head of the
state and the Mir appoints the Wazir who is his right [647]
hand man and acts as judge. [693]

All major squabbles and disputes are handled by the Mir. He holds court regularly and makes the decisions and his word is law and cannot be challenged or contested by anyone. Minor cases are looked after and into and tried by the Wazir.

Hunza does not have a jail. There is no lockup 697
whatsoever. If and when a crime is committed, the 681
criminal or culprit is banished to a place called Shim-
shal. At Shimshal the criminal or guilty person is not
confined or jailed. He just has to live in that rugged
place, where living is grim. The altitude is somewhere [133]
around 12,000 or 13,000 feet, and eking an existence
out of the land there is most difficult and precarious.
Actually the form of punishment is a sort of ostracism.

Evidently the threat of being sentenced to live in 674
Shimshal is a great deterrent, because few crimes are
committed. There have only been two instances in the
last ten years where serious crimes have occurred. In [689]
one instance it was a youth who had posted indecent
signs on trees and other places. He was hailed before

674
689 the Wazir and given a stern warning and that ended that!

682 Another case occurred about 10 years ago when the Wazir's son became involved with a young man and girl. In this case the boy and girl (for that is what they were, rather than young man and woman) were misbehaving in the area adjacent to the Wazir's home. An argument was started when they were asked to leave the premises. The young man became unruly, then offensive and he said many unkind and indecent things. The Wazir's son warned him to move on and behave himself, but the young man refused to listen and persisted in his actions. The Wazir's son went into his home, got a gun, and said to him, "Now move away from here or I'll shoot you!"

But still the young hoodlum refused to listen or be warned. So the Wazir's son shot him. At the trial he claimed that he did not know the gun was loaded and he just made the threat in an effort to frighten the lad and make him go about his business. The boy died and the Wazir's son was charged with murder, and for this he was banished to Shimshal for 10 years.

A short time later the dead boy's parents appeared before the Mir and begged him to remit the sentence to the Wazir's son, as they claimed they believed him and that he did not intend to shoot their son. Besides, their son had provoked the attack. After he had been in Shimshal for two years, the Mir had him brought back and as the matter stands at the present moment in Hunza, this lad is now the Wazir.

681 In the olden days, a form of punishment in Hunza that was administered on instructions from the Mir was to immerse the culprit in the cold waters of the Hunza River. A 15-minute immersion in these icy waters was tantamount to a death sentence.

Here are some interesting quotations from Sir Mohomed 127
Nazim Khan's autobiography . . . .

"During my thirty-nine years as Mir there have been 674
two murders only in my country and all the people
have been happy and prosperous. The Government of [648]
India had never interfered with the internal administration
of the country and as my people see more of
the world they have added cleverness to their previous
simplicity.

"There is not enough land for the growing population 167
and so I encourage my people to go out into the
world and get work in other places. . . .

"There are four clans in Hunza and in each village 692
there are appointed four 'Makaddams' (men of good
family who settle any little disputes that may arise.) If
they consider a crime is too serious for them to settle
they refer it to the Trangfas and they, in turn to the
Mir's court which is ever open and from sentence of
which there is no appeal.

"If it is considered that a death sentence is called 695
for, the people are collected and if any one will speak 681
up for the culprit, his sentence is remitted. Otherwise
he is executed in the presence of the people.

"In the former times if anyone committed adultery, 684
his house could be destroyed, his animals slaughtered 837
and his trees felled without any trouble falling on the
offenders and though that custom has fallen into desuetude,
it is still considered right for a man to kill his
wife's lover if he can catch them 'flagrante delicto'!

"Marriage is not allowed between near relations and 582
whenever possible, people marry into a clan different
from their own. Child marriage is discouraged and [177]
tribal customs have been moulded to conform to modern
ideas since I became Mir. . . .

"In former years Shimshal was used as a place to 681

681 491 which people were exiled and as officers were continually asking me what sort of place it was, I determined to go there and see for myself. The track there was very bad indeed and in two places there were goat hair bridges which were very unpleasant to cross. A ring of wood was used and the traveler was drawn from one bank to the other and if he wore a beard most of the hairs were dragged out on the way. . . .

643 595 "My father\$ had six wives, three of which were of the ruling classes and three from the Zemindaris. All however, were married to him according to the law and so he left behind no bastards."

276 177 685 276 [443] [681] The Mir told me that of late some of the young boys have taken to smoking cigarettes. This they have picked up and learned from the Hunzan men who have been serving in the Pakistani army. Cigarettes can be purchased in the shop in Baltit and a few occasions of petty theft have been encountered. In each case it seems that they stole in order to get money to buy cigarettes. These few petty crimes of course did not involve ostracism to Shimshal. It is expected that this condition will continue or even become aggravated as the youth of Hunza become more familiar and acquainted with smoking. Some of the men in Hunza smoke the "hookah" which we know as the water-pipe.

249 123 Some forms and varieties of tobacco have been tried in Hunza. I promised to send the Mir seeds of the various types of tobacco that we grow in America, such as Virginia, Burley and Quesnel. Perhaps if they can learn to grow tobacco, it will enable the youth to get their hands on some tobacco and satisfy their craving for it without resorting to other ways and means. However, they would have to get paper from somewhere for none is made or improvised in Hunza.

674 It is obvious from what I have seen, that crime and

\$ [i.e. - the father of Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan - ANALYST] misdemeanors on the scale that we know them in the Western world are practically unknown in Hunza. That being the case, it behooves us to investigate and study family life in Hunza, for juvenile delinquency is becoming a very serious and ever broadening problem in America. 674

I saw samples of Hunzan justice. Its simplicity made me weep . . . when I recalled our procrastinating, shackled, unwieldy, judicial system. In the Western world civil cases take months and even years to be heard in court before a judge. In Hunza there are so few cases of wrongdoings, or even individual or family problems, that a hearing can be arranged almost immediately. 692

Petty squabbles or differences between husband and wife or even other disputes can be brought before the Wazir or before the Mir in private. When something more serious is at stake, the grieved party or parties bring their case to the "morning durbar," which is held regularly in the courtyard surrounded by the beautiful gardens at the entrance to the Mir's palace. At the time I was at Baltit many workmen were busily engaged in erecting a large stone enclosure or balcony where the "durbars" will be held, allowing more room for spectators and greater comfort for the counsel. [illegible]

During the proceedings the Mir sits comfortably ensconced on a square-shaped wooden divan, luxuriantly smothered in rugs, fancy cushions and tapestries. There is none of the strict court procedure or dourness and frigidity known to our Western judiciary system. Here one feels that he is talking to a friend—a fellow citizen—or at least, an acquaintance. [352 643]

Perhaps we have carried our ideas of justice, freedom and democracy a bit too far. In order that everyone may be afforded justice and fair treatment at the hands [illegible] of his fellow man and see that it is fairly and impartially carried out, we have made it too complicated. Is there any justifiable reason why it should take months or even years for a civil case to be heard in court? If there are not sufficient judges, I'm sure it would not be difficult to appoint or elect more of them. If there are not enough court rooms and court houses, I feel confident that, with American construction at its high peak of efficiency, it wouldn't take long to correct that.

Then why isn't it done? I don't know the answer. Do you? The Hunzan system of justice seems to be functioning in a most satisfactory manner. Anyone may petition the Mir and unless he is away, can get an almost immediate hearing. If the Mir is not available or if the problem is not a weighty one, then the Wazir can attend to it.

In truth, justice can be simple!

* * * * *

In order to get into Hunza you must obtain a permit from the Pakistani authorities in the capital, which is Karachi, but I understand the government is being moved from Karachi to Rawalpindi or a new site close to it. I still think it is more important to have the Mir's invitation, because even though you could get into Hunza, you would be practically helpless without the Mir's assistance and cooperation.

[124] Unless you brought a guide with you and one who could speak English and translate for you, you'd find the going very, very difficult in either Nagir or Hunza. Therefore I would suggest that if you contemplate a visit into this area, you obtain the Mir's invitation or permission first. Then go after the Pakistani government's permit.

648 131 Why the Pakistan government regards Hunza as a strategic region or area is not hard to understand if

you realize that Hunza's neighbors are Afghanistan, 648
China and India and slightly above a narrow corridor [131]
of Afghanistan there is Russia, just a scant few miles
from the Hunzan border.

Therefore, any person who wanted to start trouble with either Russia or China could get into the Hunza area and it wouldn't take too much maneuvering to cause an international incident, especially if the Chinese or Russians were looking for an excuse. So I don't blame the Pakistani government for being cautious and realistic about those possibilities.

Just a few years ago an American scientist working 648
with funds raised by an organization started for that 177
purpose, known as the Central Asiatic Research Foundation, wanted to take a couple of the Hunzan boys to the United States and have them educated there and then brought back again to Hunza. At first the Mir flatly refused. Then after reconsidering the matter, and perhaps in consultation with others, he changed his mind and gave his permission. I did not inquire as to the exact rhyme and reason for the developments that took place, but eventually the Pakistani government decisively and definitely refused to allow the boys out of the country.

It appeared to me that the Mir felt that there was no reason why he should refuse when the foreign policy of his country was being looked after in Karachi. I am more than certain that the Mir's opinion was recorded in Karachi.

But John Clark, the writer of a book about Hunza, [114
and some American authorities were very annoyed at this and felt that the Mir was being unreasonable, ungenerous and to say the least, unkind in not allowing these boys to come to America.

I did not know then the true reasons behind the Mir's

648 177 refusal and what other intrigues were involved, and when I questioned him about this and he explained, I realized that he had acted wisely—and so will you.

"If I allowed those boys to go to America to be educated and then come back to Hunza in a few years, both the Chinese and Russians could say that I sent them to America to be brainwashed, filled with propaganda or trained in subversive capitalistic activities.

"Well, I'm not giving Russia or China any excuses. We are a peace-loving people, we get along with the Chinese and the Russians, we mind our own business and we intend to stay free of entanglements and embroilments, if humanly possible.

"They said that I had refused to let the boys go because I was afraid that when they came back they would teach the people the American way, and that would undermine my rule and to a degree that is true, because I think my people are the happiest and healthiest in the world, and that is more than any other nation can claim. So I would like to keep them that way, if possible.

771 "But I'm not afraid of my people becoming educated because we do everything within our limited powers to further their education now and have done so for some years."

This statement I found to be absolutely true. The Hunzans by and large are the best learned people of that or any other area in India or Pakistan. Please don't misunderstand. I don't mean that there are no better educated individuals in these two countries because that is not so. I mean that there are few places in Pakistan or India where all of the male citizens are afforded the opportunity of getting an education without cost. That is true in Hunza.

These schools that I saw seemed to be comparable to the average little red school house in the West. The one in Baltit was quite a bit better and as good as any of our schools of 25 years ago . . . which I would say was mighty fine going for a far off place like Hunza. 871

Then I asked the Mir what had happened to John Clark's woodworking school and he told me, with calm deliberation, that he knew and felt that Mr. Clark was an earnest, honest man with the best of intentions. . . . "But, how could he," went on the Mir, "hope to improve the economy of our little country by means of a woodworking school and the training of our men in woodcraft when we do not have the required wood? We can't cut down our apricot trees, which are our very life, in order to get wood to use in making things that we could export to the United States!" 874 322 177 114

Then I recalled from Mr. Clark's book that he did have great difficulty in locating suitable lumber for his school.

From what I have read and learned on the scene about Clark's work, I know he was a man of high caliber and integrity and did a mighty good job with the boys, but for some strange reason there is an unusual silence about his work and his efforts. I could neither understand nor explain it. I'm still trying to get the true impression of the people concerning this matter.

At this point I want to emphasize that I am not seeking to pick a battle with anyone, but from my travels back and forth and around the Hunzan territory, it is fantastic to believe that there could ever be sufficient timber to make it worthwhile to run a woodworking school, especially to make woodcraft for export purposes.

Stonecraft, yes—for stones, even including some of the more precious and rare types, could without doubt be found in Hunza or at least in the mountains close

874 by. And if they were taught to make useful jewels and
177 do other types of work with rock, then they would have
322 something, because the supply is absolutely unlimited.

114 I agree wholeheartedly with the Mir that the thought
of making a worthwhile contribution to the people of
Hunza by opening a woodcraft school is utter nonsense.

CHAPTER 45

The Happy Hunzans

My Chief Objective in going to Hunza was to try, first, to find out if the people of Hunza were as healthy and as long lived as many writers and reports claim them to be. 121 164

Secondly, if they were the healthy specimens of mankind that the writers said, then I wanted to find out how this came about!

I don't claim to have any special perceptive powers, but the moment I arrived in Gilgit, I resolved that all of my faculties would be centered on observing the why's and wherefore's bearing on the health of these people.

I didn't have to be a very keen observer to realize quickly that in Gilgit the Hunzan aura of health did not hold. But remember, that was in Gilgit.

Gilgit reminded me very much of the typical frontier towns as we knew them in America, except Gilgit 361

361 [342] didn't just spring up overnight. By the appearance of the stone and mud houses, as well as all other features about the city, it was obvious that the city had been there for a long, long time.

Gilgit is indeed a strange city. It is one of these places that is right in the middle of nowhere, but to that mountain-harnessed area, Gilgit is a mighty important, strategic spot. Somehow I had the feeling that if there was a place called the "crossroads of the East" Gilgit had the sole right to the appellation, for through Gilgit would pass caravans from China, as well as travelers from Russia, Afghanistan, Persia, India, Pakistan and yes, undoubtedly from all other parts of the Eastern world.

000 While I did see quite a bit of the city and the surrounding country, I regret today that I didn't dig a little deeper and get about even more. I think Gilgit has many interesting stories to tell . . . how could it be otherwise? And if I ever go back (and I intend to) I would like to be the one who brings these tales to light!

121 [164] The Gilgitis, from a health standpoint or from appearance in general, did not impress me one bit. The people were somewhat similar to what you would find or expect in Pakistan or India. However, the moment I crossed the bridge over the Gilgit River and got into the hills, I resolved to concentrate, coldly and with deliberate calculation, on every individual we met. So many confusing and contradicting statements had been made about the people of Hunza, that I was firmly resolved that if study and scrutinization and observation would do the trick, then I would find out the truth.

124 Akbar was keeping pace with Cecil most of the time, while Sherin was with me, and I questioned him closely about every person that we happened to meet or pass. I had no trouble—none whatsoever—in spotting a Hun-

zan. And it wasn't because I was smart. There obviously 124
was a distinct difference and anyone could pick out a
Hunzan from a Nagirwal or any of the other citizens
thereabout.

Much has been said about the walking habits of the 481
people of Hunza . . . the long distances, the climbs, [147]
their endurance and their sprightly gait. I have had
little experience with their endurance, but of their gait
I can speak with some degree of authority. They have
the lightest, easiest walk or pace that I have seen anywhere
in my life. They seem to glide or spring effortlessly.
If any people on the face of the earth have
learned to walk without wasting any energy, I believe
the people of Hunza have learned that secret. That's
the only way I can account for our guides, for example,
being in exactly the same condition when they finished
their day's travel as when they started. I fully realise
that they are accustomed to doing this. On occasions
at home I have walked 12 miles at one march—and
enjoyed it—but I was tired and mighty glad to take
a good rest when I reached my goal.

I cannot recall one occasion where I saw a Hunzan [147]
resting after a walk. I practically retraced every foot
of my journey back and forth and also the side excursions,
but I couldn't find one occasion on which the
Hunzan men had to rest. They not only seemed, but
actually were, totally imperturbable, nonchalant and
at ease wherever they went. Their stride was livelier and
lighter than anything I have ever seen.

Furthermore they never slouched, whether walking, [516]
standing or sitting. No matter where you saw them,
they held their heads erect and chests out.

Now this is not an afterthought because I began my search and observations the moment I left Gilgit. They didn't walk—they seemed to float! I wish I knew their

481 secret . . . but perhaps it isn't a secret! It's most likely inherent—they have it when they're born.

770 The closest thing to the Hunzan gait that I ever saw was in Agra where the famed Taj Mahal is located. There were a couple of hours unfilled in our time schedule, so we took a stroll through the city. What a city! (But that is another story.) My eyes were rolling like a man in a delirium to take in all of the scenes that were going on about me. When I heard what sounded like a song or a chant, I turned about trying to find the source of the merriment or music, and then I saw the source. I stood and waited and a troop of men passed by in front of me, single file and spread about 10 feet apart. Most of them wore but a loin cloth; the day was hot and sunny. On their shoulders they carried a wooden yoke, that stretched out on either side about a foot from their shoulders. From each end there hung a string and at the end of the string was a platter. The entire affair resembled a balance—the kind that justice is supposed to bear. On each of the platters stood a bottle with a fluid in it. The gait of these men was light, flowing and even; the men were all singing.

I stood and watched them file past me. There were about 70 of them. I looked about me, searching for someone who could explain these goings-on. A few inquiries led me to a native lady of the upper caste who spoke fluent English. She told me that these men had been to the Ganges 60 miles away and they were carrying holy water in the glass containers that were placed on the balanced platters. Their load could not be put down until they reached their destination. They had already gone 60 miles and some had a mile or two more to go and others had 10 miles and some even 50 more miles. They could transfer their load to some other willing helper, but it must not touch the ground.

These men were carrying water from the holy of holies—the Ganges. They were intoxicated—not with wine, but with their faith. They were excited with the mysticism of their god; they were inspired; they were in seventh heaven. Yes, the gait of these divinely influenced people was close to the pace followed by the people of Hunza. 000

If I had seen somewhere along in my travels a Hunzan who slouched, dragged himself or in some other way showed a sign of weakness or debility, I would say so, but no such Hunzan did I see. 481

I fully realize that I scoffed at my Hunzan bearer that the Mir sent along with me from Kerimabad to Nomal, especially when he wanted to take the horses back from Chalt and leave us because he said he had blisters on his feet, due to the exceptionally hard push we had made that day, but remember, he was 20 years older than I! His feet probably told his age but he certainly didn't look it.

If there are sick and infirm men in Hunza, they must be exceptionally well-hidden, because I didn't see or find any. 164

Then, too, writers and observers of the people of Hunza always mention and stress the fact that they are a happy pleasant people. To this I must also assent. I did not see a sad or disgruntled Hunzan. I do not mean to suggest that they ran about the streets giggling and laughing, but they were of cheery, amiable countenance. Here I am going beyond those with whom I walked and talked and ate; I am delving into the citizenry that I passed on the roads or streets, those whose farms and homes we visited and also those whom I observed in passing. 157

Let me here illustrate another point. For example, it is understandable that we here in America, or people 181

151 in other countries distant from Hunza, would attach an aura of mystery or superhumanness to the people of Hunza, but the truth of the matter is that even in Pakistan the belief or the tale concerning the superiority of the Hunzan people also exists. In Karachi, when I mentioned I was going to Hunza or seeking to go to Hunza, ears pricked up quickly. They were interested, they were intrigued, for they knew and had heard tales of the prowess of the Hunzans.

A few weeks before I left home I learned that there was a Pakistani boy employed in Niagara-on-the-Lake and I made an attempt to contact him. My wife just about that time met the Pakistani lad and his wife at a social function and she told him that I wanted to see him and talk to him about Pakistan and about the people of Hunza. Then, when he heard that I intended to go to Hunza, he excitedly informed my wife and stressed that she be sure to tell me not to go because the roads in the mountains were terribly dangerous, that one could penetrate into that country only at the greatest of risk and danger and that many people had set out for Hunza and never been heard of again.

When my wife brought this tale to me, I was perturbed. I was worried and my wife was even more concerned. If a native of Pakistan, and not an illiterate, I want to remind you (this man was a technician), held these people in such awe and fear, you can see that the myth about the people of Hunza is universal.

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147
It is further claimed that the people of Hunza have endurance that is unsurpassed by any other people on earth. I believe it was Eric Shipton, the famous mountain explorer, who said that the Hunzans had more endurance than even the Sherpa guides that are found on the borders of Nepal and Tibet. These Sherpas have long been considered the people with the greatest en-

114 [147] durance and stamina known anywhere, and if Shipton says that the Hunzans had more endurance and stamina than these people, no higher tribute can be given.

It is my humble opinion that too much has been written about the people of Hunza by people who have never been there and know little or nothing about the actual conditions that prevail in that country. Then, too, many visitors spent most of their time taking pictures, viewing the scenery and dining at the Mir's and didn't pay much attention or learn anything about the actual living conditions of the people.

177 The people of Hunza have not in the least benefited by the visitors that have reached Hunza, and if future visits are discouraged, I believe there would be good cause for it.

164 [759] Most of the diseases known to civilization are unknown in Hunza. I do not ask you to take my word for it but that is my report from consulting the resident doctor in Hunza, as well as a German woman doctor who visited Hunza.

It is further true that the Mir's wife, the Rani of Hunza, had her appendix removed and she took a trip to Rawalpindi to have it done. But in the first place she does not live according to Hunza standards and besides, it was probably stylish to have an appendix operation. On the other hand, if a good surgeon were let loose in Hunza for a few weeks, there's no doubt about it, he'd have hundreds of appendixes removed before he could be stopped.

122 Another important point that I wish to make at this time is that I paid my own way to and from Hunza. I had no financial backing. Therefore I am not committed to aid anyone or any product or radio station or newspaper. I have no one to fear and no one to please. I can afford to tell the truth.

000 I do not intend to set the Hunzans down as a pattern or an example of how we should live because it just couldn't be done. However, unless you are stone deaf, blind and dumb, you can't help but realize that there is something drastically wrong with our way of life and living. That is why so many eyes and ears are being trained on Hunza. We hope, we pray that they have the answer.

There has been an awakening and it is growing throughout America. People are seeking health today more than they ever did in the history of mankind. But even with all the enlightenment available, they're still groping . . . they don't know where or how to find it, and the pity of it is that it is really so simple.

Too long already have we left our health and well being in the hands of doctors and surgeons and other types of healers, without going to the proper source—oneself and one's food. You forget that doctors, nurses, trained technicians and hospitals and other similar institutions are there to try to cure, not to prevent or advise. There is just no profit for anyone in propounding or teaching the simple, natural method that can keep everyone in good health. After all, a large share of our entire economy is now built around medicine, medical provisions and medical institutions. No one—not even the heads of our governments—would risk the shock that would be felt throughout the country if this gigantic, needless, useless structure were to be abandoned as it truly should be.

164 From what I have seen, from what I have heard and from what I have learned, I have reached this definite conclusion: no one single factor can be held up as the reason for the splendid health of the people of Hunza.

CHAPTER 44

Health

For Me To Say that the Hunzans are the healthiest 164
people of the world, which many authors and writers 114
have claimed, would be sheer effrontery . . . mainly because I have not studied the health of all the peoples of the world, nor have I even met them. However, I do attest from what I have seen and observed, that the Hunzans are one of the healthiest people of the world.

To say that they are completely free from diseases or 754
health problems is definitely not true. At the time when 115
I visited Hunza there was a resident doctor located at
Aliabad, where he was in charge of a 10-bed hospital. [743]
I conversed with him and questioned him daily during my stay and he answered my pressing questions with complete frankness and candor.

He is only a young man, a Pakistani, and his name is Dr. Mohammed-Yusuf Khan, M.B., B.S. He is a handsome, capable, well educated doctor and is, in my

759 115 humble opinion, equal to the best medical men that we can turn out of the European or American universities. Besides his medical degree, he also has a bachelor of science degree which most of our doctors do not have. So if anything, he is perhaps a little bit better learned than our average physician.

164 One of the first questions that I asked of the Mir of Hunza was, "Are there many known epileptics?"

The Mir thought for a moment and then shook his head and said, "No!"

So I turned to the doctor who was on my left and said, "Doctor, do you know of any epileptics in Hunza?"

At that instant the Mir got up and left the room . . . and I wondered about this.

There was a definite purpose behind my question concerning epilepsy. You see, it has always been my conviction—or at least for 25 years—that epilepsy is strictly nutritional. Of the few epileptics that I knew in my life all had peculiar eating habits . . . that is, they had their positive likes and dislikes . . . and from that day to this I have believed that epilepsy was basically nutritional.

"Yes," the doctor replied, "right at this present time I am treating three epileptic patients. One is from Nagir and two are from entirely different locations in Hunza. But the Nagir case is one of these dream cases —the kind that every doctor hopes he'll come across some day in his work."

"Yes," he went on, "this Nagir case performs every act described in the medical journals. He's a perfect textbook case. The sick man has every condition, symptom and manifestation of epilepsy known to medical science."

Statistics indicate that in America there is one epileptic to every 350 of the population. The population of

Nagir and Hunza would be somewhere around 50,000 164
people. That would allow the people of these two principalities 140 epileptics, to be on par with America.

When I mentioned this to the doctor, he pooh-poohed the idea and said, "I'm sure there wouldn't be a dozen epileptics on both sides of the river. In fact, with these three I think I have them all."

"What is the most prominent complaint that you find among the people?"

"Dysentery," he replied, without hesitation.

"Do you know the cause?" was my next question.

"I'm afraid I can't answer that question with any degree of authority or proof, but I can tell you this . . . that it is seldom very serious and the condition usually clears up in a few days. I know of no deaths caused by it."

Now the Mir returned and I was relieved, for I felt 124
that I had offended the fine man by asking the doctor if there were any epileptics in Hunza, when he had told me there weren't any.

So I turned to the Mir and explained the situation to him, stating that in my eagerness to get the data I had asked the same question of the doctor and mentioned my fear of offending him.

He replied, "I believe friendship is made of sterner stuff than that."

I was surprised and delighted by this statement.

Then he explained that he was called by one of his servants who had signaled to him—concerning preparation for an event that was to take place that evening.

My next question to both the doctor and the Mir 164
was, "Is there anything in the line of health or disease that is developing in Hunza different from the old pattern? Things that didn't occur before, that are beginning to appear now?"

164 "Yes," said the doctor, "I am alarmed at the great increase in goiter cases in Hunza, especially among the younger people, where it is rampant. Also, cavities in the teeth of the people are being found regularly, whereas a few years ago tooth trouble in any form was practically unknown, judging from the information at my disposal!"

When he spoke to me he was genuinely distressed at the increased occurrence of both of these maladies.

"To what do you attribute the increase in these conditions, Doctor?" I asked.

He replied, "As yet I have been unable to lay my finger on anything specific concerning this."

262 263 I have been interested in Hunza for many years and during this period I have devoured every available piece of literature on these fascinating people. Thus, marshalling my mental forces, I said to him, "Have any major changes taken place in the diet or living habits of the people of Hunza?"

"Not that I am positively aware of," he said meditatingly.

[439] "Where do the people of Hunza get their salt from?" I asked.

"It is usually flown in from Pindi to Gilgit and then carried up the trail to Baltit and other parts of Hunza."

I learned that it was also carried by jeep and pack animals from Rawalpindi across the Babusar Pass into Gilgit as well.

"How long has this been going on?"

[439] This the good doctor could not answer. But the Mir was close by and he said it was longer than ten years now that the salt had been imported.

"Where did you get your salt from before?" I said to the Mir.

263 "Why," he replied, "the people of Hunza have been

317

mining salt from an area around Shimshal for many hundreds of years." 263 [3/7]

"Is there any difference between the salt that you import and that of Shimshal?"

"Much difference," said the Mir. "The salt that we import is pure white and very salty, whereas the salt mined in the Shimshal area was in its natural state and contained many impurities. The people prefer the imported salt because of its sharper saltier flavor."

"So it is true then," I said to the Mir, "that this aspect of modern civilization has crept into Hunza!" [177]

The Mir and the doctor looked at each other and then somewhat reluctantly nodded in agreement.

Speaking somewhat forcibly, I said to both of them, "It is obvious that the imported salt is pure sodium chloride, whereas the salt that is brought down from Shimshal is something that has never been analyzed and obviously contains many minerals, so-called impurities."

Obviously the people of Hunza in the past did not know, did not care or did not feel the need to purify their salt, because even to a layman like myself, it is clear and obvious that by making a brine, the pure salt could be extracted.

Whether by error or design, this has never been practiced in Hunza.

"Does it not seem possible," I said to the doctor, "that the salt that was formerly used by the people of Hunza was the means of keeping goiter and dental caries away or at bay?" 164

"I hadn't thought of it before," replied the doctor, "but I will admit that it sounds logical and undoubtedly it is true!"

The Mir further admitted that little or no salt was being mined in Shimshal at the present time. Therefore it would seem to be indicated that the importation of

164 salt is causing the present goiter and dental caries situations in Hunza today.

"How would you describe the health conditions of the people of Hunza?" I next asked the doctor.

[758] "Since my coming to Hunza a little less than a year ago, I have treated but a few patients a day and seldom are there more than one or two of the hospital beds utilized at one time. Apart from the greatly increasing incidence of goiter and dental caries, no other disease seems to have a firm hold in Hunza.

164 167 "Now that many of the boys and men of Hunza are leaving to go into the army in Pakistan, as well as seeking employment in other adjacent areas, diseases never known in Hunza before are making their appearance.

753 757 "Another unfortunate characteristic that I have to contend with is the fact that the people feel quite shy of coming to a doctor for advice and treatment, especially when it is concerned with the personal parts of the anatomy. Actually they are callously indifferent to medical science. The majority of them are, in fact, still living in the bygone age when diseases were supposed to be due to influences of evil spirits. So they depend to some degree and waste much of early precious time in useless superstitious pursuits of driving away the ghost."

164 These one or two patients that he treats daily have in most cases only minor ailments and, at that, a good share of these come from across the river and from the neighboring state of Nagir.

It occurred to me that there would probably be more illness during the winter. Many cases of eye troubles are treated during the winter, due, primarily, to the fact [354] that most Hunzan homes are smoke-filled, because of the floor center fires and only the hole in the roof to allow the smoke to escape. Visitors invariably find living indoors and the smoke intolerable, but the people of

Hunza are more or less used to it. However, it does cause trouble with the eyes of the natives. It also weakens the lungs of some of the older women, who probably spend most of their time indoors during the cold months of the year. 164

I questioned the doctor and the Mir concerning prenatal care, but from what they told me, I could find no provisions whatsoever made for prenatal care outside the individual home. 843

The death rate at childbirth, they told me, was next to zero, but the doctor also mentioned that a woman would not consider going to a doctor for gynecological reasons under any circumstances. She would rather die. He also told me that before and after delivery of a child, Hunzan women do not know of any rest. The pregnant woman works harder and does more laborious jobs till the last day of the term, in the belief that hard and laborious work makes delivery easier and uneventful. 165 845 757 843 846

"But," he went on, "they are very careful in exerting themselves during the early days of conception. After delivery they are again up and doing again, only after a short rest."

It seems to be obvious that the method followed by the women of Hunza prior to childbirth "works" because both mother and child come out of it "uneventful." When events occur at such times, it usually means serious trouble. 843

He went on to tell me further that gallstones, renal calculus, coronary heart disease, hypertension, valvular lesions, myxoldeama thyrsotoxcasis, mental deficiencies, cancer, poliomyelitis, arthritis and diabetes are absolutely unknown in Hunza. 164

From what I have seen and gathered I am worried about the situation. They are now importing their sugar, 177 263 439

177 their salt and soon there will be a few more items added
263 and, as more of their people go out of the country to
439 earn a living and come back to visit or retire, more of
civilization's curses will be brought back with them.

165 The doctor rather clearly indicated that infant mortality
114 was not as low as some writers would like us to
believe. I repeat—he made this quite clear.

164 Now I'll let you decide how it ties in with the statements made by Sir Robert McCarrison: "During the period of my association with these people I never saw a case of asthenic dyspepsia, of gastric or duodenal ulcer, of appendicitis, of mucous colitis, of cancer. . . . Among these people, the abdomen oversensitive to nerve impressions, to fatigue, anxiety, or cold was unknown. Indeed their buoyant abdominal health has, since my return to the West, provided a remarkable contrast with the dyspeptic and colonic lamentations of our highly civilized communities."

276 Smoking in general is not an addiction in Hunza. The water-pipe or hubble-bubble is used by some of the people, usually at gatherings or ceremonies. It is then passed around in a wide circle, each one taking a puff
[562] or two. The women are included, but only after all the
men have finished.

Some of the citizens use snuff. It is tobacco mixed with the ash of a plant called "sopa," which is indigenous to that area. They take the tobacco and the sopa ash, put in a dash of water, stir it up and mix it into a paste. Then they place gobs of this paste under their lip, exactly the same as the snuff chewer does in the West, although this practice has been dying out in the Western world.

164 Just how much of the health of the people of Hunza
132 is due to the fact that they get a lot of sunlight? That
is a most pertinent question and one that will take a lot

of study before an answer can be given. They do get more sunshine than the Nagirwals—of that there is no doubt. While in Nagir fields are definitely in better tilth, their land is deeper, they have broader and more fertile valleys and can grow more and better food, yet undoubtedly the people of Hunza are by far the handsomer, healthier, more industrious and more energetic. 132 164 [133]

For my part I wasn't completely sold on the principle that the people of Hunza did have much more sunlight than the people of Nagir and I debated the matter with a few individuals. But each of them maintained stoutly that they did and claimed that they had scientific proof that Hunza did get more sunlight.

The last man with whom I did battle on the subject was Dr. Hermann Berger of West Germany. From his investigations he said that he had reached the conclusion positively and unequivocally, that the northern slope of the mountains through which the Hunza River flowed did get more sunlight than the southern slope which was Nagir. 132 114

As I found considerable difficulty and doubt concerning the theory of the people of Hunza getting more sunlight than the people of Nagir, I decided to draw a little chart that would illustrate the situation as I eventually found it to be. After seeing the drawing I think it will prove to you that the principle is natural and reasonable. (*See Fig.* 1.) f/A

f/A [facing p. 390 - ANALYST]

CHAPTER 45

Where Is Hunza?

131 AT FIRST I HAD TAKEN it for granted that everyone knew exactly where Hunza lay. Then after many folks had queried me about the location of this strange country, I found that Hunza was seldom listed on any map and not even mentioned in many encyclopedias and gazetteers. Therefore, it is only fair and right for me to tell you where Hunza is and, if you do know, I trust you will pardon my repeating the position, but I want to establish its area clearly.

At the extreme northerly tip of Pakistan, rubbing shoulders with Afghanistan on the west, China on the north and northeast is Hunza and just 14 miles beyond the narrow corridor of Afghanistan lies Soviet Russia. [133] The gateway between Hunza and China is the famed Mintaka Pass which is the original route followed by Marco Polo back so many hundred years ago. Hard-by is where the Hunza River has its source. This area along the Hunza River is the principality called Hunza. 431

It is nestled in a most enchanting setting, surround- 133
ed by three of the world's greatest and tallest mountain
systems. Another piece of knowledge that adds even [103]
greater interest and appeal is the meaning of the names
of the three mountain systems: Hindu Kush means
"killer of Hindus" because so many Hindus have lost
their lives in crossing this range; Himalaya means
"abode of snow", well-named when one considers their
height and the vast masses of glaciers lying on the moun-
tains' breasts; Karakorum means "the black rock" and
one has to actually penetrate this system to realize how
accurately those hard bare stone walls are named. The
word Kush is pronounced with an "oo" sound. Hima-
layas is pronounced with the accent on the "al". The
Karakorums are pronounced with the broad "a" accent
for the first syllable and "oo" sound for the "um". This [104]
word can be spelled either "am" or "um". I prefer
"um" because that is more in keeping with the sound
as spoken by the people of that area.

Hunza actually forms a part of what was the old Kashmir and on maps it is shown as part of Kashmir and Jammu.

During my travels through the area I was plagued with the questions . . .Where exactly are the Hindu Kush, the Karakorums, the Himalayas? Where among these ranges is Hunza? 'Tis simple, you say? That's what I said, too, until I began to investigate and ask questions. Then I found myself in a maze of confusion from which I found it difficult to extricate myself.

Surely one would believe that learned people, high school or university graduates both in America and abroad, would know a bit about the most important mountain systems in the world. But, no! Ask them yourself. See the ambiguous answers you get. Then you

131 will understand why "it plagued me thus."

133 [114] Many writers who have visited the area, and many others who have not, refer to Hunza as being in the Himalayas. I am sorry to be forced to contradict these good people, but from my research—and I repeat, research—I have come to the conclusion that Hunza is definitely in the Karakorum system and not the Himalayas.

[114] If this error was made just occasionally by casual visitors or tourists, it could go unmentioned, but when men with science education and degrees make this mistake, it is somewhat unpardonable. There are very few maps or gazetteers that give this information accurately, and if you think I came by this information easily, I would suggest that you take down whatever maps you have available and do some research on the topic.

The eventual decision as to which are the Karakorums and which are the Himalayas came about when it was firmly laid down in one place that the northwest upper Indus separates the Karakorums from the Himalayas. The Karakorums seem to start about where the Hindu Kush ends in Kashmir. The exact spot, according to the best data that I could obtain, is 74 degrees east longitude and from there the Karakorums run approximately 300 miles southeast down to the main bend of the Shyok River. Even encyclopedias are not completely reliable in this instance, because one encyclopedia (in fact, Columbia is the one I'm talking about) lists Mountain K2 which is now known as Godwin Austen as the second tallest mountain peak in the world and places it both in the Karakorums and in the Himalayas. The Hindu Kush culminates at Tirach Mir —26,426 ft. high. Just about there the Karakorum range takes over and extends as specified above.

7:Tobe C.T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

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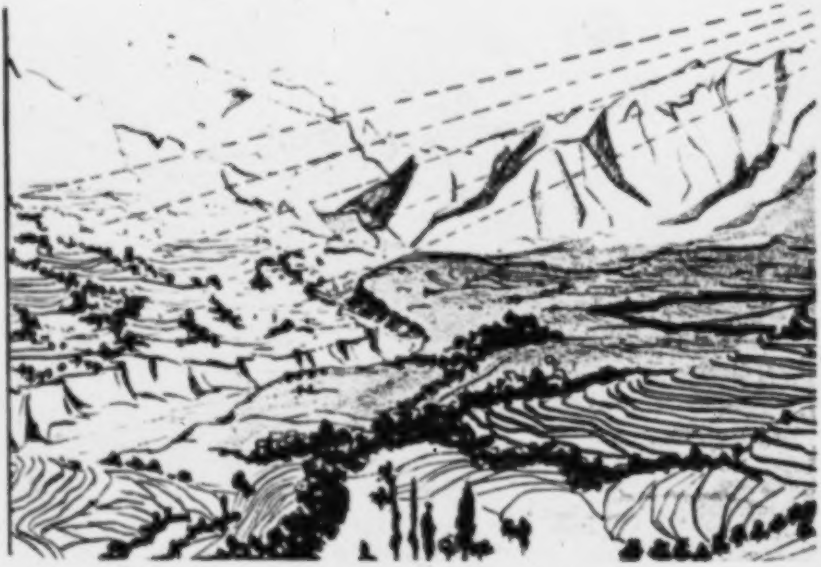

The Hunzans are conceded to have superior health to their neighbors. Nagir land is more shaded by mountains. (*Figure 1.*)

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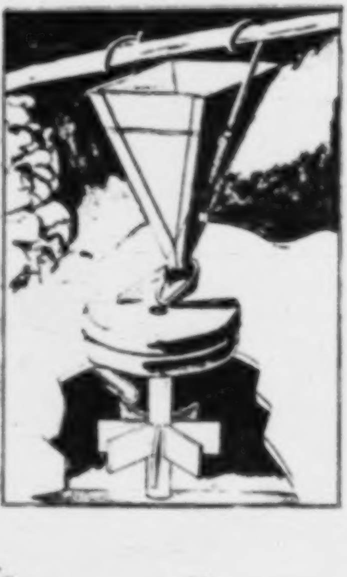

A water powered stone mill used by the Hunzans for making flour. (*Figure 2.*)

[facing p. 390]

[p. 390-A]

7:Tobe C. T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

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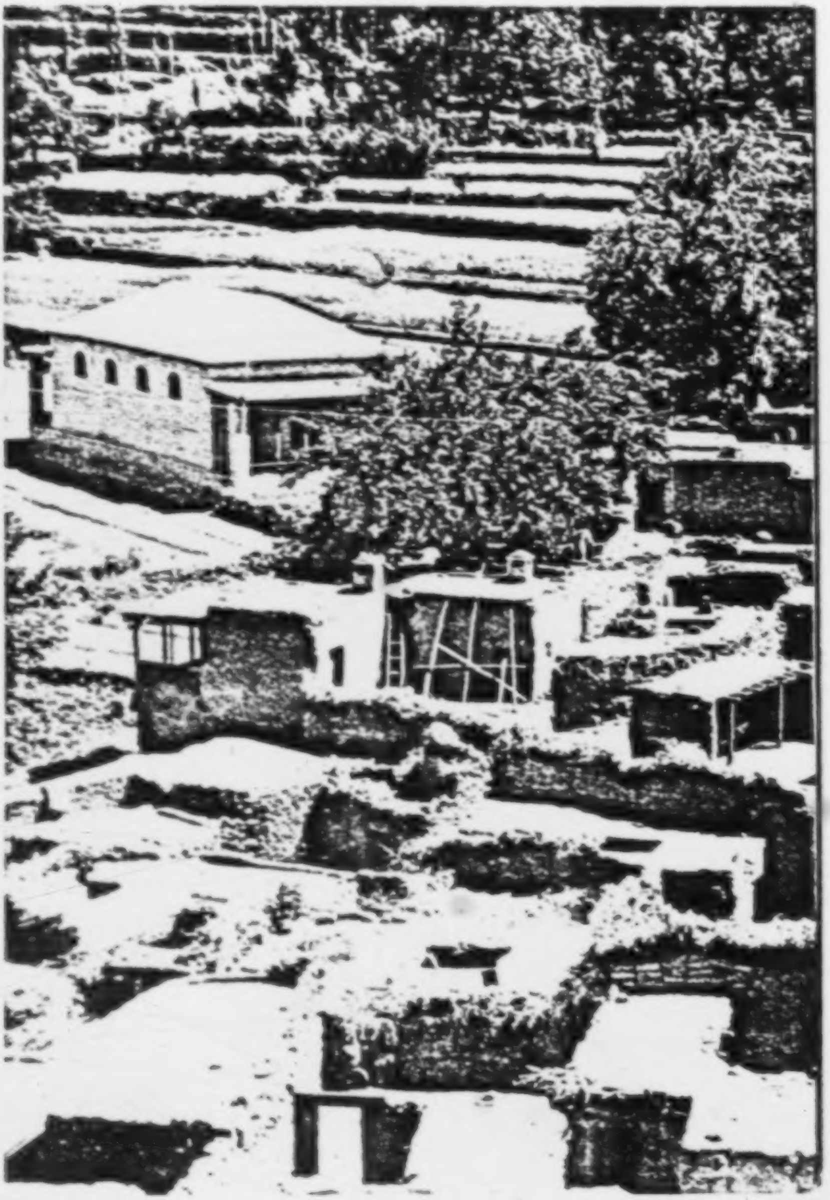

[p.390-B1]

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

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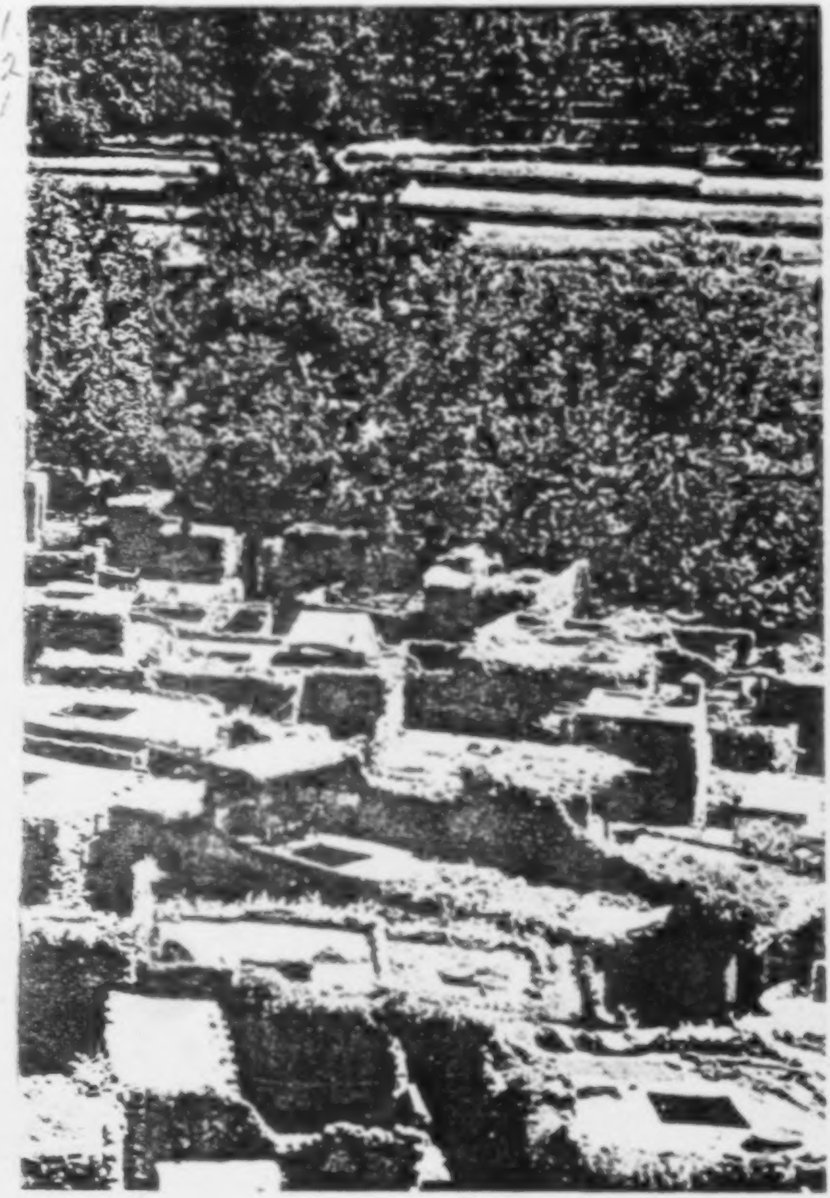

Hunzan houses have no chimneys—just a hole in the roof for smoke to escape.

[p. 390-B2]

7:Tobe C.T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

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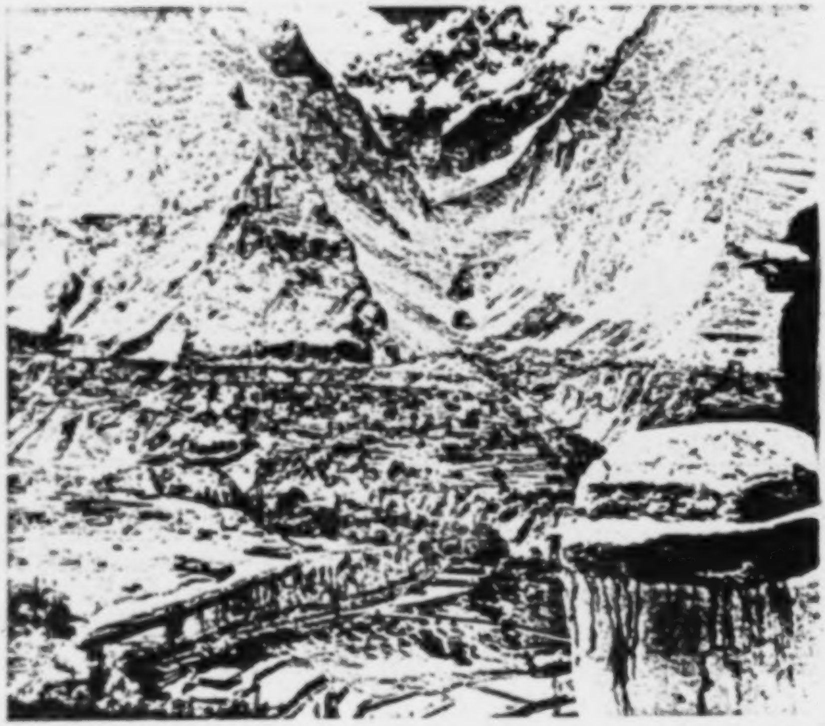

View from the Fort at Baltit.

[p.390-C]

Part or all of the armies of Alexander the Great 131
wound their way through the Hindu Kush mountains. 133
Whether or not they ever found their way into the [173]
Karakorums, history does not designate, but I suspect that they did, because the Hunzans are supposed to be descendants of Alexander the Great or his soldiers and Hunza is in the Karakorums.

The Himalayas in the encyclopedia are stated to lie in India, Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and China but I know for certain the Himalayas extend into Pakistan as well.

At this point I am not seeking to take issue with any [114]
gazetteer, encyclopedia or other volume of facts. I am just pointing out the difficulty I encountered in getting the information down to a semblance of order and accuracy. Further, I have consulted with, written to and requested details from many sources who should know the facts, and in practically every case I came to a dead end. It seems as though very few people in the world know the exact location and extent of these three mountain systems.

One man who did seem to know them and placed them accurately was Eric Shipton and by the heavens, he should know—he spent more time among these mountains than any white man in history.

A curious thing about the people of Hunza . . . they 823
do not have names for the peaks in the area and there 103
are some mighty lofty peaks. Even the famed Rakaposhi has no individual name in Hunza. It is just called "Dumani," the same as every other high mountain or mountain peak that they came across. Actually, "dumani" means "covered with a cloud."

I guess they're so accustomed to seeing these awesome peaks that they become impervious to them. So what? Another hill! Every time I asked one of the

823 103 bearers the name of yon mountain, he pointed to it and said, "Dumani!"

It was quite some time before I found out that it wasn't the same mountain we kept seeing from different views or angles. In fact, after the second day's travel and the only peak that we had passed was "Dumani," I began to get suspicious and thought that somebody was pulling my leg. As a matter of fact, I didn't find out that "Dumani" meant "covered with a cloud," "high peak" or "big mountain" until I came across Professor Berger in Baltit. He, being interested in the language of the people, put me straight on the "dumani" business.

What made matters even worse—or should I say, more difficult—was the fact that long after we had left the Hunza area, people kept telling me about the "Dobani" nullahs and the "Dobani" mountains. Sometimes they said "Dobani," other times they said "Dubani" and then they would also say "Dumani" and "Domani." I don't think they know themselves exactly
[133] what they mean. Of course when they said Dumani Nullah, it would mean the "river flowing from the glacier on the breast of the mountain" and when they pointed to a hill and said "Dumani," they meant it was a big hill.

133 In trying to relate the circumstances covering our travel and journey from Gilgit to Hunza one must maintain a sort of running encounter of the trail and the incidents surrounding it. Then, too, in other parts of the book I try to tell about the agriculture, the habits and health of the people of Hunza. Therefore little time remains for one to describe the charm, the beauty and whatever else may be said about the scenes one passes.

So will you bear with me while I try to describe as graphically as possible one day's journey through these mountains. 133

There is little beauty to be seen until one gets beyond Nomal. I felt that the enchantment of the mountain terrain did not begin until we reached Chalt. From there to Baltit was one bit of indescribable grandeur after another.

From broad undulating valleys and river beds you suddenly come to a place where the mountain walls seem to come together to form a gorge. Here the river churned and frothed in its azure murkiness. The dark rock walls in all their sharp angled beauty presented an awesome spectacle and gave one the feeling of being suddenly closed in. For thousands of feet upward, shelves, abutments, butts, curves and gradings swept on in seemingly never-ending succession. Not a tuft of grass or even a bit of green moss or lichen could be seen by the naked eye. 'Twas bare but still beautiful . . . unadorned, but bejewelled. Then above were the light and clouds . . . and beyond, the blue sky and occasionally the sun could be seen.

The road would climb, weave and wind. It would 133
broaden to 3, 4, or even 5 feet. Then 'twould narrow 487
down sometimes to a bare 14 inches where the outside shoulder of the road had collapsed or fallen away, leaving a ragged, rugged edge which one took good care to avoid.

In places where the trail all but disappeared the solid rock face of the mountain wall had been chipped away or incut to allow a body or a small animal to pass. One had to crane one's neck or stoop to prevent a whack on the head that could send you hurtling down thousands of feet.

Continually there were patches of scree or morain that might be a hundred feet or a mile or more in

133 487 length. Over this the horses clattered judiciously, placing one foot down firmly somewhere before they lifted another. 'Twas the only way they could maneuver through this pebble and rock dashed remains of a slide. Masses of mountains dimmed in the distance.

Now and then a nullah would leap into view and [491] had to be crossed or forded. Yes, many of them, the more or less permanent ones, were covered by bridges . . . some sound, durable and strong and others, more or less makeshift, which one had to cross with prudence and yet alacrity.

133 487 491 Whenever a rafik hove into view, I unconsciously would suck in my breath quickly and steel myself for the mental ordeal to come. There I knew the trail was held up or was maintained by a few slabs of rock pressed into fissures on the rock surface of the cliff or even a built up wall of stones, laid carefully one on top of another without being cemented in any way. At other times there were rods of steel driven into the rock surface and upon this the boards or road was laid. How these supports held, heaven only knows and there they were, jutting out over emptiness or nothingness. Did they fall away? Was there any danger? Well, you can answer that question for yourself. If you were going to travel along the trail to Hunza, they had to be crossed and the fact that they were continually being erected was ample proof that they were continually falling away.

133 487 In many places the road ribbons to a narrow ledge along a precarious outcropping of rock . . . courses that have been cut and built into the very face of the sheer and protruding cliffs, and many from a few hundred to many thousands of feet above the valley floor and often more than 15,000 feet above sea level. Landslides, washouts, rains of gigantic boulders, disintegra-

133 487 tion of rafiks have played havoc with travelers and caravans on this route since the first enterprising man inched his way across. Yet then and now bold, brave, fearless men were attracted and fascinated by the call to the serene loveliness, adventure and danger.

133 311 Then islands of greenery began to appear more frequently. These were the terraced fields, the oases that marked the villages. It was a pinpoint of light in a sea of darkness where rest, drink and food could be found, even if unappetizing and unabundant. These spots of green at sky-line-blue heights, among the millions of acres of barren rock and emptiness were pleasing both to the eye and soul and comforting, too, for the traveler.

Elsewhere, in the Hindu Kush or the Himalayas, could be found verdant valleys and hills and mountaintops that were furry and treed. But in the harsh, bleak, black Karakorums, such heavenly blessings could seldom, if ever, be found. Even the terraced tiny green fields could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be compared to a tree-covered hillside or mountain. Yet, let it not be said or thought that these bleak, barren hills did not have their loveliness and charm. They possessed beauty! Yes, they did! Like a tiger, 'twas fierce, sharp and untamed, but nevertheless, true beauty!

133 487 In the distance, one could always watch as the hills rolled, soared, dipped and then fell away to merge with the blue of the horizon. I know at times, allowing my vision to soar and wander about the mountains in the distance, my fatigue and weariness were forgotten and I plodded on, unmindful of the trail. My mind soared from peak to peak—some cloud-haloed, others bold and sharply defined.

One was always meeting the Hunza River, either face to face or having it course along at your side. Then,

133 too, as you rose where the road led on high crests, you
487 could see the river winding, twisting, bending in the distance and you knew that you would be there soon—in an hour or a few.

As you course your way along the trail, you see the snow and ice covered mountain ranges with their glorious majestic crests gleaming in slides of silvery softness. You follow a road, that was known for at least a thousand years as a snaking, curving road of exceptional beauty, mid towering heights, nameless peaks and grave hazards.

487 'Twas but a scant few decades ago—yes, even that
439 short a time—that one or two successful caravan trading trips, winding their way from China to the Khyber Pass via Peshawar, Pindi, Gilgit and the Hunza and Nagir Valleys, could make a trader rich, if he could get through without mishap and avoid being robbed by brigands.

The camel caravans would be laden with silks, gaily colored cloth, clothing, tea, porcelain, earthenware, jewels, gold and silver, ivory, salt, sweetening, spices, trinkets and bottles, fancy slippers, foot coverings, vases, trays and fancily inscribed artware, bars of iron and steel, knives, cooking utensils..

On this caravan route, animals do not walk side by side, but one behind the other.

[648] It is no wonder that the owners of the caravans were glad to pay tribute for safe conduct through these defiles and passes.

We met caravans but they were evidently coming from the Pamirs and heading towards Gilgit, Peshawar and Srinagar. They were good sized ones with many donkeys and camels. The altitude wasn't high enough for yaks.

They looked sort of nondescript to me. I thought they would be more interesting. But what can one expect from hard working travelers through a wicked terrain? They didn't look rich or impressive, but I was forced to admit that it did take courage and determination. 'Twas not meat for a weak man. 487 439

It occurred to me that a caravan would not be easy picking for a bandit or bandits. They'd best have superiority of numbers because men with weak stomachs or weak heads don't travel in caravans.

What is the lure that mountains hold for many men? 000 I've learned that they can be as beautiful, as enchanting, as alluring and yes, even as demanding and possessive as any woman. I have never known a man who went to his death for a woman, but I have read and known of many who went to their death for a mountain . . . Nanga Parbat, especially.

They must exert a tremendous influence over man. And it is a fascination that never wears off. It's easy not to fall in love with them as long as you have never seen them and been among them but, if you are so unfortunate as to have made their acquaintance and mingled in their company, then you are lost. You will never be indifferent to their charms again. They'll permeate your heart and soul and penetrate reaches that you never knew you owned—and you own them no longer, for they are possessed by peaks and snows and summits and glaciers. You will never again know rest or settling down, for the glaciers' gleam has struck home and to it you will have to return!

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CHAPTER 47

Hunza Agriculture --
"Use and Return"

In a Country like Hunza where land is so scarce and therefore precious, it behooves the man who tills the soil to get everything he can out of it and, what is even more important, to put back everything humanly possible so that he will be able to maintain it indefinitely, in a high state of health and fertility.

The people who farm that land realize full well that their health, their well-being and their very lives depend entirely upon the crops that are produced. In order to maintain the soil in good health and tilth, nothing can be wasted.

Where irrigation is used, the leaching of soil nutrients can and often does become a serious problem. For example, at Gilgit when I was visiting the P.A.'s garden, he informed me that he was having trouble growing certain crops, which were infested with insects. Now this is not in Hunza, but in Gilgit.

241 After close examination of the various factors, as well as the slope of the soil and the supply of water, I reached the conclusion that the trouble he was having was positively caused by the overflowing water—too often and too much. Whoever it was who was irrigating his garden allowed too much water to come down the trenches and when it overflowed, it took with it many of the water-soluble nutrients from the soil.

Therefore, wherever overflows or runoffs are allowed on terraced and irrigated soils, there will be a positive leaching of the nutrients, which will end in imbalance and cause crop difficulties and bring on insects and diseases.

In Hunza, each farmer applies his water personally and when sufficient water is put onto his fields and crops the flow is immediately stopped. In Gilgit, the P.A.'s gardener didn't worry if there was any runoff. In the first place, the land wasn't his own. Secondly, he had a large area to look after and probably couldn't give it as close attention as it required. But with the Hunza farmer it was entirely different. He had only a small amount of land ranging from ¾ of an acre to 5 acres, sometimes made up of 3 or 4 pieces—some as small as 1/10 of an acre each. Therefore he could afford to watch every inch of it with care, affection and understanding, and I'm sure the Hunzans learned long ago that the overflow could in subsequent years bring disease, crop failure and destruction.

As I walked among the farms in Hunza, I specifically looked for the overflowing of irrigated terraced lands, but I did not in one case see this happen . . . which led me to believe that the Hunzan farmers have learned that principle well.

Along the trail, whenever I came in sight of the irrigated patches that indicated the cultivated farm-land of the area, I tried to figure out exactly what the different crops were. In my travels throughout other parts of the world—for example, in Europe—I would be hard pressed to pick out the different crops that were being grown in the fields by their color, their height and the way they bent or leaned with the breezes that blew. But all along the trail leading to Baltit, on both the Nagir and Hunza sides, this problem was not as great, nor did it cause me as much difficulty for identification purposes, because the majority of crops growing was wheat.

I kept looking for rice paddies, because I definitely had the feeling that throughout this part of the world a lot of rice would be grown. And while I found a lot of rice being grown in Pakistan, Afghanistan and India, in Hunza and Nagir rice in the fields or paddies was distinctly conspicuous by its absence. I did find a field here and there, but they were definitely few and far between.

Students and those interested in organic agriculture have looked upon Hunza for many years now as the last stronghold of nature's way. Because of the importance attached by many people to conditions in Hunza, I tried to make my study as careful as possible. As yet there is no sign whatsoever of chemical fertilizers being used.

Because of the terraces built one upon the other, Hunza farming has been termed "staircase farming" and this staircase farming has some, if not many, advantages. First, it effects good drainage. Second, it gives a deeper penetration of air into the soil. This soil aeration is considered beneficial to soil microorganisms and it promotes rapid growth, and enables the bacteria and the roots of plants to derive much benefit from the elements contained in the air, which can be combined with those in the soil.

The glacial waters definitely do contain a variety of

241 minerals and by allowing these glacial streams to be spread over the soil, the nutrients are left in the soil as the water soaks into it.

The principle of returning to the land that which belongs to the land has been and is, at the present time,
scrupulously followed. The only farm implement which
[407] I could find on the Hunzan farms was the primitive
[492] plow and invariably it was pulled by a bullock. The
plowing is never deep and is practiced chiefly to sort
of clean the field, cover the organic matter that has
been spread upon it or left upon it and prepare the
field for the next crop.

[464] All the work that has to be done is done by hand—with or without the assistance of domesticated farm animals. There is no substitute for manual labor and the men, women and even young children share in the farm work.

[137] From what I could observe, weeds were not a problem and the reasons are clear. There are few indigenous, native plants in the area. Practically all of the growing plants that I could spy were in cultivated areas. The maxim in Hunza evidently is if a place can grow weeds, then it should be cultivated and usually that principle is followed. This all adds up to the fact that there are few weed seeds distributed in the area and therefore they are not in the soil to spring up, whenever the farmer's back is turned.

[134] I want to stress once more that the mineral requirements of the fields of the Hunza farmer are met and replenished by the fine silt, ground by the glaciers from the rocky surfaces and carried down to the Hunza farmers by the conduits and spread on their land.

Our modern civilization attaches great importance to and stresses the value of flavor and appearance in the commodities that they eat. If that is the criterion, 241 then I am forced to admit openly that the fruits, vegetables and cereal grains of Hunza do not compare with those of the West.

Contrary to what any writer, expert or visitor to [114] Hunza has stated, in my opinion and belief, Hunzan fruit, vegetables and grains are not superior to those of the West. From the strict viewpoint of taste, size and appearance the American fruits, vegetables and grains are far better than those grown in Hunza. In this matter I must humbly yet fairly state, that the American standards and qualities in fruits make the similar varieties of fruits of other countries seem poor, puny and second rate by comparison.

Hunza need not feel too badly because of this as millions of dollars are spent annually in America by a hundred or more experimental farms of vast acreages, breeding fruits, nuts, vegetables, forage crops and grains. If some of these newer varieties of fruits or vegetables and grains were grown on Hunzan soils and under Hunzan conditions, I might have a different story to tell.

Let me cite an example. In America, in order to find 000 a better strain of strawberries, millions—and I repeat, millions—of seedlings have been planted. These plants have been carefully tended and watched. Then a selection of a mere handful from all of these for further testing was made. From these results a few new varieties which have shown an excellence of habit of growth, vitality, good foliage, ease of propagation, resistance to various diseases, flavor and color of fruit, good bearing qualities and other important factors were selected and disseminated throughout the country. No one in his right mind would expect tiny Hunza to follow such a procedure. In fact, only in the United

000 States would such an undertaking be possible.

It is difficult to make comparisons flavorwise because there are many varieties of each and every fruit and vegetable. We have all eaten peaches that were filled with juice and flavor and others that were flavorless and mealy. We have all eaten carrots that were sweet and crisp and we've also had them where they had no flavor and tasted like dried wood or were bitter. Two different kinds of carrots grown on the same soil can have an entirely different flavor. This could be applied to beets, peas or any other garden crop. The fault therein does not always lie in the soil, but in the inherent characteristics of the variety itself. Therefore the superiority of the flavor of the fruit in most cases lies in the variety, rather than in the soil in which they were grown. Sometimes time of harvest is a factor, too.

241 While I would very much like to say that the natural organically grown Hunzan fruits and vegetables and grains were much superior in flavor to those grown in the West where chemical fertilizers are used, I am afraid that I cannot honestly make that statement.

But I suggest that the thoroughly inbred organically minded individual take heart. If the people of Hunza had soil that even remotely resembled our best near virgin soils in tilth, humus content and expanse, along with the newer and better strains of fruits, vegetables and grains, I am sure they would have the best flavored, best tasting and best quality food crops in all creation.

I know for an absolute fact that there are many farmers—hundreds and probably thousands of them in both Canada and the United States—who do not use chemical fertilizers. Perhaps it is my good fortune to eat most of my grain, fruits and vegetables from such farms and in truth, I strive in every instance to procure organically grown fruits, vegetables and grain. Further, on my own farm we definitely and positively use neither chemical fertilizers nor sprays. 241

You can understand in Hunza that tastewise there is no interference or problem from chemical fertilizers and sprays.

I believe that the myth about the flavor and succulence of the Hunzan apricots came about because [114] visitors ate the apricots ripe and freshly picked from the trees, whereas at home the apricots they ate were picked from the trees days before, because they had to be shipped long distances, and therein lay the difference in flavor.

In January, 1959, I sent the Mir of Hunza good 123 sized packages of the different kinds of hardy wheat 241 that were created by the experimental farms of the 177 Dominion of Canada. It was special seed, tested for hardiness in the colder areas and of such quality that would produce a fine loaf of bread.

I also sent the best strains of carrots, cabbages, Brussels sprouts, lettuce, beets and other vegetables. But when I was dining with the Mir and asked him about the results with the seeds, he admitted that the only seed they had got planted that year was the lettuce, which was being enjoyed at the Mir's table. He said that he would try the rest of them the following year.

It is understandable that the Western world would have better varieties of fruits, vegetables and grains, because here we spend millions and millions of dollars on hybridizing, trials, selections and improving the various strains . . . so we should get some results from our efforts . . . and we do! Therefore, without question, the Hunzans could profit by using Western strains of grains, vegetables and fruits. This is one aspect of modern civilization that could help them greatly.

The apricots that I saw, tasted and ate were not the

123 huge fine quality products that I was told they were. I
241 admit here further that I was in Hunza in July and the
177 later, perhaps the better, varieties were not available or ripe yet. But upon questioning the various people, there was no information given to me that indicated the later maturing kinds were superior to the earlier ones.

So as in vegetables and grains, their fruit could be greatly improved by adopting some of the Western varieties. This could easily be done by having budwood sent to them and they in turn would graft this budwood onto their young stock.

I have made arrangements with the Mir of Hunza and the P.A. at Gilgit to supply them with this required grafting wood at the proper time, and it will be duly sent to them, so that in the future they may have some of the benefit of the West's hybridization and research program. I took along with me a few of the best budding knives that I could procure and I left two with the P.A. at Gilgit and the others with the Mir of Hunza and I explained their use.

245 In talking with the Mir about the planting of new varieties and improved strains, he claimed that his people did graft and seek new varieties and strains, but from the little time I had to inspect things, I did not see any young trees or any great number of grafts that would indicate this being a widely practiced policy. I found nothing resembling a nursery in Hunza or Nagir, but there was a small, unimpressive nursery run by the Pakistani government in Gilgit. Maybe this is the forerunner of bigger and better things to come.

241 There appears to be no central source of seed supply in Hunza. It seems that each farmer saves seeds for next year's crops or barters with his neighbor. In some
[2-5] years, when, because of any one of many conditions

that may exist or be created in an agricultural com- 241
munity, no seed is available, the Mir has been known 643
to procure supplies from neighboring states and supply his people with sufficient planting stock.

While through the entire East cow dung and yak 241
dung are used for fuel, in Hunza this is positively not 372
true. The Hunzans are too intelligent to use the mainstay of their lives for fuel. Once it is burned it is gone; but if it is put back into the land, it is there to produce crops for another year. They show their intelligence, if proof of their intelligence is needed, by this one sound principle of self-survival in their means of agriculture.

However, in the more northerly sections of Hunza, closer to the Chinese border, they do use yak dung for fires because of the almost total lack of wood or other types of fuel. They just have to keep themselves warm during the winter.

Here is a list of the vegetables grown in Hunza— 244
potatoes, turnips, carrots, beans, peas, lettuce, pumpkins, tomatoes, melons, watermelons, radishes, onions, cabbage, spinach, cauliflower.

In fruits there are mulberries, apricots, apples, pears, 245
peaches, grapes, walnuts, almonds, a few plums and some cherries.

Grapes are grown fairly extensively because they can plant them against most any wall, as long as they have a bit of soil in which to gain a foothold for their roots.
From these grapes they make their Hunzan wine. [273]

They grow a few strawberries, but I could find no currants, gooseberries, raspberries—nor did they know what raspberries were.

The grains grown in Hunza, starting from the most 243
important, are wheat, barley, rye, millet, buckwheat and a small quantity of rice. Some alfalfa is grown as 246
a forage crop.

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There are no bees in Hunza and, consequently, no honey unless it is imported. This will probably come as a surprise to most people. I suspected this even before I reached Hunza. That is why I went in search of bees and honey in Hunza. But search and peer as I did, no bees were to be found and upon questioning I found that, though they had even tried importing them, they didn't remain or they died off.

Obviously the Hunza terrain is too tough and arduous for bees. Bees, contrary to what most people believe, like it soft. Set out a field of clover or a good sized patch of asters or other good honey-makers and bees will flock to your land, but, where you have a scattered flower here and there, the bees either won't bother or won't be able to find them.

Probably from a purely economic reason the bee finds Hunza uninviting. He probably would have to fly too far and too high to get any supply of nectar or honey and I don't think he'd make as much food as would be required to supplant the energy that was being used up. So after taking the important factors into consideration, it is clear that it is unwise for bees to live in Hunza. Even if it were possible to get a couple of colonies of bees established, it would do the Hunzan farmer no good because if he took away part of their honey, they would starve to death. A bee in most instances, where at all possible, stores more honey than he will require. He plays it secure by allowing a margin of safety. But in Hunza he'd have a hard enough time getting sufficient honey to keep him through the winter—let alone having some for the Hunzan farmer! From this it would appear that bees are not as smart or diligent as we think they are—or are they? Can they be blamed for seeking more colorful flowerier pastures?

CHAPTER 48

Religion and Customs

THE PEOPLE of Hunza are Mohammedan. From all reports that I have been able to gather and from their own voluntary statements, I assume that religion with them is something that they don't go overboard about. As a matter of fact, Hunza is one of the few countries in all the world where there has never been any religious strife, nor does even the faintest glimmer of it exist there today.

In other words, they can take their religion or leave it alone!

Just how important a part this plays in the economy of the people is hard to estimate, but one thing is sure—religion does not make the demands upon their time that it does with many other people. In the East, where religion can be a mania or almost a complete absorption or way of life for many people, this can be of vital consequence.

643 Here I will quote from *The Autobiography of Sir*
771 *Mohomed Nazim Khan,* K.C.I.E. (Mir of Hunza from
798 1892-1938 and grandfather of the present Mir):

[127] "The people of Hunza were originally idolators and they became Shias when intermarriage with the ruling family of Baltistan was arranged and later, when my great grandfather Shah Salam Khan was on the throne, most of the country became Maulai. In Ganesh and Hinni, there are still a few Shias and two Sunnis. When I became Mir I declared to the people that they could adopt what religion they would, which annoyed my advisers who said that a country with many religions was bound to fall. I said that religion had nothing to do with ruling and have proved myself right in that there has been no religious strife in the country since that time."

788 Maybe the Hunzan farmer mumbles his prayers while he is working, but he seemingly doesn't appear to stop from his efforts on behalf of his farm.

000 From my actual experiences in seeing and viewing religions throughout the world, I am of the opinion that, where religion demands too much of a man's time, his industry suffers and this affects his standard of living. It is a possibility that pious, religious people throughout the world will take exception to this but, nevertheless, I am stating this as my own opinion, based on my findings and observations, and that's all it is. If anyone wants to debate the point with me, I'd be happy to provide the time and the opportunity.

The Hunzans are not fanatics and therefore they can devote more time to their labors than those who spend their time praying and resting, because of religious holidays and observances.

852 Being Mohammedans, circumcision is practiced on
304 all male children. Normally this operation is performed

when a child is one month old. Due to any one of 852
many circumstances, it can be put off, but it is performed 304
before the child becomes of school age in practically all cases.

The Mir told me a case of a man who came from 582
Murtazabad. He had gone away to Persia when he 304
was just young and eventually returned to Hunza uncircumcised. Then he met a girl, fell in love and wanted to get married. Before the marriage ceremony could be performed, he had to allow himself to be circumcised. This, in a mature male can amount to major surgery and a long period of illness, pain and recovery.

Evidently circumcision has been proved beneficial to mankind because, from the information that I have received, it is now generally practiced throughout the Western world as well. It is unthinkable that any Mohammedan would take unto himself a wife before he had been circumcised. By law a man can marry at 15 and a woman, or should I say girl, when she is 9 years of age. Therefore it is almost compulsory that circumcision be performed before a male is 15.

It is quite common for the parents to arrange for 582
their children's marriages when quite young. That is, [584]
the parents betroth the children to each other even from the tender ages of childhood. Nowadays in Hunza the men marry between the ages of 19 and 21 and the girls from the ages of 13 to 15. Actually that isn't too far different from the custom in the West.

All marriages take place at one time of the year in 585
Hunza—usually December 21st—and there must be snow on the ground on the Hunzan wedding day.
Where the Mohammedan law runs in opposition to the [671]
Hunzan law, the Hunzan law invariably prevails.

Yes, there is divorce in Hunza, but it is very rare. 586

586 The Hunzan law says that in such cases a child must remain with the mother until it is at least 10 years of age. Of course the child can remain with the mother after that period, too, but the father does not have to pay for its keep after that. Divorce is granted to a man only on the grounds of adultery.

Under Hunzan law a woman cannot get a divorce due to any action on the part of her husband. However, [643] on some occasions where there has been extreme provocation or other clear logical reasons, and the woman brings her justifiable complaint for divorce before the Mir in person, and if the Mir believes her case merits divorce or separation from the man, he will ask or demand of the man that he divorce his wife.

If the wife decides or wants to leave her husband's bed and board of her own free will, the husband does not have to pay for her keep. She will not receive sustenance from him, but he does have to supply her with clothing twice a year.

587 In the event of the death of his wife, the husband is required to wait two months and seven days before he can remarry. However, with the woman, in the event of the death of her husband, she must wait three months and ten days before she can remarry.

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683 The Mir gave me an example of a divorce case where a certain man had the insidious habit of beating his wife. It seemed he would administer a sound thrashing at the slightest, or even without provocation, until the girl's parents and friends began to fear for her life. In this instance the wife-beater was notified quite clearly and distinctly that it would be in the best interests of all concerned if he gave his wife a divorce.

586 I don't know in what light they regarded this, but now that they knew the man was an avowed wife-beater, if any other woman took the risk of marrying

him, she would at least know beforehand what she had to contend with. Then again, as the Mir performs all marriages, maybe he wouldn't allow this young man to take a second wife. I did not inquire any further into the details concerning this case, but I admit that I was somewhat surprised to think that a good healthy happy Hunzan would resort to one of civilization's favorite pastimes . . . wife-beating. 586

Wife-beating generally seems to be broadly practiced in Hunza. This struck me as being most strange for I could see little cause or likelihood of opportunities for misdemeanors on the part of the wife. 593 683

Upon taking the matter up with the Mir, he told me that most cases of wife-beating were brought about by nagging, and in Hunza that is sufficient justifiable cause for a man to administer a sound thrashing to his wife and she can't take him to the Mir's court about it, either. The next most frequent cause for wife-beating is over-generosity to her parents with her husband's possessions.

Wife-beating under such provocations as stated might meet with universal support and approval on the part of mankind. There may be principles and practices in Hunza that will not find widespread support in the West, but I'll bet on the basis of the two causes for wife-beating there will be broad, if not general, male approval. 000

By Hunza law a daughter cannot inherit property. The best that she can get in a property settlement is the use of the property for her lifetime. It then must revert to a male member of the father's family. There have been instances where a daughter has been willed an individual tree—in most cases, an apricot tree. This remains her property, or at least the crops do, for as long as the tree or she lives. 428 423

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Morality in Hunza is of a high level, equal to that of the best records in the world. Sexual promiscuity on the part of either male or female is practically unknown. It is clear and established that they are clean thinking and clean living people. However, the Mir did tell me that on rare occasions there was trouble involving the eternal triangle.

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The strangest custom that I found practiced in Hunza was that followed by the royal family . . . that is, the Mir's family . . . and it pertained to their children. As soon as a child is born to the royal family, it is given out to foster parents to be reared and brought up by these parents as their own. And there the royal child remains for an unspecified period of years. The child is brought to the palace on occasions and then returned to its foster home.

The exact purpose for this practice was hard to pin down. I felt that probably it was done to save the queen or Rani the difficulty of raising the child through its infancy. I also thought that perhaps this would allow the queen to have more children, and thus be sure to create a long line of descendants to follow in the ruler's footsteps or lineage. It was also suggested that this was a way or manner or means of strengthening the ties of the ruler with his people—a sort of democratic gesture.

The people to whom the child is given out for rearing are referred to as "milk parents" or "milk family." The tie that is thus established with these people is never broken. The individual members of the family are referred to as the milk-mother, the milk-father, the milk-brother and the milk-sister.

In every case, before the child is given out to its milk parents, their character, their habits and their way of life are carefully scrutinized so that the royal couple know that the child will be given a fine upbringing. 644

853 608 It is to be expected that the milk parents will be given much consideration and favors from the Mir's household and family . . . and the Mir has and still does provide better than average homes or residences for these selected people.

In Hunza at the present time, the Mir has built a row or unit of bungalows for these milk parents and they are given food and necessities from the royal kitchen.

I have tried to find some connection of this practice with other nations or peoples. So far my search has been unsuccessful in this regard.

761 Death is not the serious thing with the people of Hunza that it is with most other peoples throughout the world. That does not mean that there is no sadness and mourning, but it does not take on the same scope and seriousness that it does in the West. This is primarily due to the religion and beliefs of the people. Being Mohammedans, they believe in predestination . . . "So Allah wills."

769 765 Seldom are graves of departed kinfolk visited—nor are flowers laid upon them. In fact, very little maintenance is ever carried out on graves. Visits to the graves or graveyards are definitely not encouraged. The dead are revered, but visiting the grave of the departed is not really the accepted thing in Hunza.

769 764 [484] [312] The dead are often commemorated by having roadside lean-tos or "baldies," as they call them, erected for them . . . where a man can stop and find a bit of shelter during a storm, or rest his pack or load. They also build "jhurks" or water holes to serve the same purpose. Women are seldom commemorated in this manner. The best that a woman can hope to get is a rock pile erected in her memory.

CHAPTER 49

Hunza vs. Nagir

184 After I've had some time to think over the experiences of my visit to Hunza, I've been asked by others and I've also asked myself, "Is there any reason for the evident superiority of the Hunzans over the neighboring peoples?"

So I took the case of the people of Nagir, for example, and made comparisons with them. I'm not even sure whether that is a fair or proper means of comparison.

It seems somewhat strange to me that while the virtues of the people of Hunza were being extolled, the bad features or unredeeming qualities of the people of [101] Nagir were being brought to the fore. So I took pains to search and investigate and I came up with the fact that the people of Hunza and Nagir are of identical stock and that it was people originally from Hunza who populated Nagir.

Then wherein lies the difference? What happened through the years to create the obvious difference that everyone sees and feels the minute he comes into the territory? I am not an anthropologist, nor have I training in any scientific field. Therefore, I am quite unprepared to speak with any degree of authority, but I am told the difference is that the people of Nagir accepted or welcomed strangers and settlers from other parts of the area and thus, they became a polyglot group of mixed blood, habits, customs, religions and thought, whereas the Hunzan people, then and today, discourage outsiders from coming to live among them in their country. Then, too, I guess another important factor looms and that is that Hunza is not nearly as inviting from an economic viewpoint to a man coming from another part of the world to settle, whereas Nagir does offer many more advantages. 184 167 [114]

For me to assert that there are no mixed bloods in Hunza would be an untruth, because even in my travels about the towns and along the road, I saw distinct types that were not of the run-of-the-mill Hunzans. Some were distinctly Chinese and I am also reasonably sure that there is a fair amount of Afghan blood among the Hunzans, besides Russian—for, as you may recall, Russia is but a scant 14 miles away. 144

It is not my intention to try to build up a case for true-bloods as being the Hunzan heritage, for history clearly indicates that it is among the people of mixed bloods where the greatest advances are made in science, industry and the creative human arts.

In Hunza there are very few plains or expanses where farming on a large scale could be practiced. However in Nagir it is quite different. There were sections through which we passed that were wider than the eye could reach, covered with good soil that was carrying 184 241 311

184 a good crop of various kinds of grains, forage, vegetable
241 crops and fruits. In Hunza this just doesn't occur.
The terrain is steeper, more precipitous, more difficult
311 and seldom if ever does a flat open area come within
the limits of normal vision.

[133] Then, too, Nagir has many more nullahs formed by
the melting glaciers. Rakaposhi is located in Nagir and
surrounding it are many snowfields and glaciers which
are used, trained and harnessed to irrigate their country.

Indubitably, the fates and nature have been much kinder to Nagir than they have to Hunza.

438 Let me also tell you frankly that on many occasions
the people of Hunza purchase or barter various types
of food from Nagir. I asked the ways and means that
[437] were used in effecting these deals and found that in
most cases money—earned by the Hunzans in service
in the army, portering for expeditions and given to
them as gifts—was the means.

184 One might gather from what I have said and even
[628] from talking to various people or natives of the area,
that the Nagirwals and the Hunzans are deadly
enemies. But that is not true. The people of Hunza
[186] think themselves much better than the people of Nagir.
They do believe that they are handsomer, healthier,
cleaner and are better husbandmen, but yet there does
not appear to be any cases of conflict, physical or
armed, between the two peoples.

123 I recall a little incident that may be of some interest.
We rounded a spot—I guess it was 10 or so miles from
Minapin—on the way up to Baltit and there we saw a
decrepit, ragged looking Nagirwal. In his hands he
[231] held a pair of chickens. They were the typical chickens
of the area—full grown but the size that our chickens
are when they're half grown. He waved them in front
of us as though indicating they were for sale or could be

Nagir

had. We slowed down—we didn't actually stop—and our guide asked the price, or got into some hassle-tassle about them anyway. The discussion took place in Burushaski.

There didn't seem to be too much palavering and our bearers took the two scraggy birds and stuffed them into their coats—one each, just as we would stuff something into our inside breast pocket. The chickens' heads stuck out, but they didn't seem to make any great attempt to get away. I didn't see any money change hands.

Then the old fellow disappeared behind a thicket for a moment; it was a group of willows and other shrubs or trees growing there. He came back with a butchered one and he tried to press it upon me. I didn't want it, but the man was so earnest in his desire to present it to me. I didn't know if he wanted money or not, but he didn't seem to care. He just wanted me to accept the chicken. I didn't want to offend him and as pleasantly as I could I kept shaking my head. But he did not heed my protestations and tried to force the chicken on me.

Then I got off my horse and when I did, I more or less subconsciously began to rub the muscles of my legs. He quickly dropped the chicken and kneeled down beside me and began to massage my legs for me. I tried to stop him and my bearers intimated to him that I didn't want anybody rubbing my legs, but he insisted. When at last I got him to desist, we began to walk on and he followed us for two or three miles, still trying to give me the chicken. So I asked Sherin if he wouldn't take the chicken or get one of the other boys to take it.

He was undoubtedly the friendliest coot I ever saw in my life. He was as dirty as the dirtiest pig and

123 smellier than limburger cheese. But so help me, dirt, stink and all, he was a likeable fellow. If only we could have ducked him in the water and got a scrubbing brush and some soap, I probably would have enjoyed his company.

Somewhere near the next village he left us. He was almost in tears at the thought of parting. I had a quarter rupee silver coin in my pocket and gave it to him. He didn't want it but he thanked me at least 200 times for it. I'm sure he would have given me his lousy old shirt if I would have accepted it. As it was, he waved us good-bye with tears in his eyes.

643
628 The Mir of Hunza and the Mir of Nagir are on friendly terms, but I don't for a moment imagine that they are bosom companions. Yet the Mir of Hunza's wife, the Rani, is a Nagirwal. Her uncle is the present [582] Mir of Nagir. In fact, through the centuries, while the people of both these states were at loggerheads with each other, the ruling class intermarried and were always on amicable terms . . . and so it continues.

I will quote here again from *The Autobiography of Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, K.C.I.E*: "From time to time we have tried to have relations with Nagir that were friendly but they have never lasted, although there have been marriages between the ruling families of both countries. My father and Zafar Khan, Mir of Nagir used occasionally to meet and I remember well the formality of these occasions. Each would come with a large number of followers and would halt on his side of the river. On one occasion Uzar Khan came over to Hunza and there was a great feasting; on another the Mir came and I and some other people from Hunza had to go over to the Nagir bank of the river and remain there as hostages until the Mir returned."

000 The Hunzans do not only show their superiority over

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza
Nagir

The Hunzans do not only show their superiority over the Nagirwals, but over others as well. The P.A. at Gilgit, in a discussion that I had with him, admitted that when the Hunzans moved down the valley to the Gilgit area, they showed their heritage by surpassing anyone else in the district when it came to working their lands and producing their crops. They worked harder, they worked longer, they worked better. They used their experience and intelligence to greater advantage, with the net result that they were soon buying more and better land. 157

So far only a few of the Hunzans have come down to Gilgit, but the native Gilgiti farmers are already showing their resentment. Obviously they find it difficult to compete with the Hunzans on an equal basis. [16.7]

I compared the Hunzans with the Scotch people and I think the comparison has many realistic qualities. Both peoples live in a more or less barren, hilly, rocky, rough country. Both peoples have learned the value of being frugal and thrifty. They waste naught and want naught. They are chiefly outdoorsmen. They are strongly nationalistic. Then, too, they are physically independent and have little or no fear of anyone. 181

When I was talking to the P.A. I called the Hunzans "the Scotsmen of the East" . . . and I trust the Scotsmen won't be offended. In fact, they should be flattered.

Where I think the people of Hunza gain most of their superiority is in leadership. From the little research and reading I have done on the subject, it appears that for many long years the Hunzans have had good capable leaders—really strong men who ruled their people with a firm hand. 643

In reading the autobiography of the Mir's grandfather, one quickly sees that he was not only a man of action but one of ability, foresight and reason.

Now I did not meet the Mir of Nagir. Although I [123]

Nagir

643 wrote to him and asked if I could come and visit him,
123 he did not reply to my letter. No, I'm not annoyed nor am I saying anything unfavorable about the Mir because he didn't answer my letter, but I would have liked to meet him so that I could speak more authoritatively about the many unfavorable statements made about him and his people.

However, I spoke to many people who knew the Mir of Nagir personally. I passed right by his official residence both on the way up and on the trail back. It was pointed out to me and I stopped and looked it over.

643 Whereas the Mir of Hunza is respected—not only in Nagir and Hunza and the entire surrounding country, but in most nations throughout the world—the Mir of Nagir is more or less unknown and does not even have any great amount of social intercourse with his own people.

Whenever I met a Hunzan on the road and spoke to him about the Mir of Hunza and the Mir of Nagir, he would hold himself erect and say through our interpreter something like this, "Our Mir is loved and respected by his people and everyone else. His name and fame have spread throughout the world. The Mir of Nagir, nobody knows of or likes him!" If this was said to me only once or twice, I would pay little or no attention, but a similar vein of thought and expression was portrayed on many occasions.

643 I think further that the Mir of Hunza has given a
186 high standard and caliber of leadership to his people. It was apparent wherever I went. He made his people believe and feel that they were good people, that they were equal to the best people of the world and that they were cleaner, stronger, healthier and more intelligent than others, and he was not telling them anything but the truth! The Hunzans hold their heads high.

Nagir

Therefore, it is my belief, one of the reasons for the Hunzan high standing throughout the world is due to the excellent quality of leadership that they have enjoyed for many years, and is being continued by the present Mir and his staff and family. 643

I don't want anyone to run off with the idea that everything I saw about the Hunzans impressed me or that I thought they were exceptional in every way, because that definitely is not true. I did then and I do today admire the people of Hunza for all the splendid qualities that make them outstanding people. Anyone who could live in the harsh, tough, back-breaking terrain of Hunza must be made of stern fiber. Yet they have their foibles and weaknesses as well. 123 114

You see there are no immigration rules or laws to stop them from going anywhere in that area . . . at least, there weren't until recently. They could have gone to China, India, Afghanistan, Russia, Pakistan or anywhere else where the pickings might have been easier. But their love of freedom and intelligence that told them they were better off than most people in the world, even though financially poorer, kept them on the mountain slopes that are the banks of the Hunza. 486

No book on Hunza would be complete to even a small degree, unless some mention was made of the fact that it was not always known as Hunza. In fact, back before the turn of the twentieth century, Hunza was known as Kanjut and the people as the Kanjuts. 101

From records that I have located, I learned that, when the rulers of Shignam came to Hunza, they called the valley Kanjut. That name remained until the time of the Girkis and they called the country Hunza, because all of the people were united like the arrows in a quiver. In the Burushaski language Hunza means "arrow."

CHAPTER 50

Flora and Fauna

123 MY VISIT to Hunza was not basically a botanical or horticultural visit, much as I would have enjoyed spending a few weeks hunting, searching, climbing, delving into crevices and peeking into and over the rocks, crannies, cliffs and river beds—yes, and fields and anywhere a bit of green could be seen.

The speed at which I traveled along the mountain roads was slow and tedious, but it was even slower because of my interest in horticultural specimens that I noticed here and there and which I stopped to examine. But my stops to examine the flora were not 137 very frequent during the first few miles, due to the simple fact that there was not much flora to investigate, except the omnipresent Fog plant, which no terrain seemed to deter. Then of course, there was a great similarity in the flora and once I had seen a plant, I did not stop to investigate another of the same species.

However, I did stop often enough on plant examinations so that I was always a few miles behind my friend, Cec, who was not concerned with the flora. 123 137

I want you to understand that I did not do an exhaustive detailed study of the flora of the Hunza district. I am sure there are many, many more plants in the area than I have indicated or found. I just examined what I happened to pass and see. I definitely did not go out and search for specimens away from the beaten path.

You can take my word for it, the vegetation under any and all circumstances is definitely not spectacular. However, any of the plants that are found growing in this area most certainly should be hardy enough and virile enough to do well in most other parts of the arable world. 137

It is my belief that the flora of the Hunza Valley is neither varied nor numerous, apart from the fruit and nut trees which are in most cases not indigenous. The apricot, though, could be native to that part of the world . . . at least, that is what I gathered from my studies and observations.

Apricots were grown in the greatest number, followed by mulberry, walnuts, apples, plums, peaches and pears. Here and there I came upon a pomegranate tree. These, I am positive, are indigenous to the surrounding area, if not to Hunza. [245]

The trees that I passed most frequently on the roads and trails and in the towns were eucalyptus, willow, birch, poplar and the oriental plane, sometimes called sycamore and known in Hunza as the "chenar" tree. I believe these are all native to the vicinity.

I was disappointed, surprised and even shocked to find the area completely devoid of conifers or evergreen trees. I saw one pine tree in the P.A.'s garden in

137 Gilgit. With the eyes of an eagle I scanned the roadways, the byways, the mountain slopes, the rocks, the cliffs, the highlands, the lowlands, but nary a conifer did I spy.

One day when we got to see a different slope of Rakaposhi, I looked up and there about two-thirds of the way up on its higher reaches or slopes was a cluster of trees and they looked like and must have been conifers. But wait . . . Rakaposhi, according to the [133] records, is 25,550 feet high. Unless I'm as blind as a bat and cockeyed, to boot, that cluster of trees was at least two-thirds of the way up. I was standing at 9,000 or 10,000 feet. So two-thirds of the remaining 15,000 feet would be 10,000 feet. So 10,000 plus 10,000 makes 20,000. Am I trying to tell you that I saw trees growing at approximately 20,000 feet? The tree experts say it couldn't be. They would scoff, deride and ridicule my statement, for it is written and believed that the timberline is somewhere around 10,000 or 11,000 feet —or does that apply only in the North American scheme of things? Well, that might be in America, but I will swear and attest that it doesn't hold true in the Himalayas or the Karakorums. Could be that I may be erring by a couple of thousand feet or even three thousand but it would still mean that this copse or group of trees was at least 17,000 feet up. Yet I know, I feel, I am convinced that it must be 20,000 feet. I repeat this even at the risk of being called a lunatic. I've been called that before!

Other writers claim they saw pines on their travels in this district. I think they were just talking or trying to grasp something to describe in that bleak, bare area. I saw the one single pine tree I mentioned earlier in Gilgit . . . and it had been planted! Well, I'll have

137 to let you figure it out. I'm just telling you what I saw and what I think.

[133] 643 I admit that I would very much like to some day climb and find out exactly what those trees were, but Rakaposhi is one of the most difficult of all mountains on earth to climb. It took 23 attempts to conquer Rakaposhi. The first 22 attempts failed, but a British expedition succeeded in scaling her summit in 1958. One side is almost a sheer drop, so from that side I'll stay clear. Of course there wouldn't be anything growing there, anyway.

The ascent of Rakaposhi was accomplished by the British Pakistan Forces Himalayan Expedition, 1958. Captain Shah Khan, the Mir's uncle, was a member of the expedition. I quote from the account . . .

[485] "Captain Shah Khan was a most important and useful member of the expedition. He personally selected our 6 Hunza porters, and being a Hunza man himself, in fact the uncle of the Mir, we hoped for great things from them. We were not in the least disappointed."

The expedition started May 12th from Gilgit and established a base camp on May 26 at 14,000 feet. It was on June 25th that two members of the expedition, Mike Banks and Tom Pattey, reached the summit, under terrible conditions of winds and drifts.

137 Varieties of shrubs in Hunza were more numerous. I saw a few wild roses just like any wild rose you see anywhere. The flower had a slight fragrance and was reddish-pink in color.

Then there was a plant that resembled barberry, except it had a blue berry instead of a red one. The berry was edible. I tried some and found the taste pleasing and sweet, but there was very little meat or pulp. It was practically all skin and seeds. It was much

137 more prickly than our barberry. In fact, it seemed to have 5 prickles for every one that ours have and they were longer and stronger and more painful.

I recognized a variety of honeysuckle, too.

Then, of course, there was the imperturable "chush." It was found growing everywhere. I understand that its orange colored berries, which vary greatly in size, from that of a grain of millet to that of a large pea, also are edible, although they weren't as sweet or as pleasant tasting as the blue barberry, as I call it.

Caragana seems to grow widely in the area. I saw caragana plants ranging in size from 10-12 feet to one that was barely 6 inches tall, replete with all the trimmings, including the ripened seed pods. I stood entranced and marveled at the sturdy little plant growing out of the bit of soil that had fallen on the surface of a rock. I was strongly tempted to take some seeds back with me but I was quite certain that if the seed were sown in our fertile soils, the plant would quickly lose its dwarfing habit and only because it was so tiny did it look so cute and appealing.

1 Tamarix grows broadly. In fact, it is the most widely seen plant, shrub or tree in the area. On a few occasions we stopped, rested and found a bit of shade and comfort under a tamarix thicket or bush.

Herbaceous plants were more common again. At varying places along the river bank could be found fairly extensive patches. There was "fog" to which I 137 will refer a little later, and a most formidable looking 824 thistle, that neither man nor beast nor insect could get close to without feeling the barbs. My guides and bearers all warned me to stay away from it. I wanted to get some of its seed and feel, handle and examine it. On a few occasions I was determined to investigate it thoroughly, but they actually pleaded with me to leave it alone. It contains poison, they told me, and it would actually make me sick and my skin would break out in sores or a rash. 137 [824] [122]

In truth, I wasn't much worried, but, on the other hand, prudence must be considered. I was a long way from home, with a medicine kit that consisted of a bit of bandage and some salve, and I was in no position to do battle with some unknown, dangerous and perhaps poisonous plant. So I heeded their entreaties and left that symmetrical, unusual, neat but murderous looking plant alone.

The plants that I actually saw in flower along the trail or in the fields were very few. There was the wild rose, the fog, the inconspicuous flowers of chush and the fringed gentian and a few poppies. Remember, this was in July and very few plants, shrubs or trees are in flower at that period.

Yet, I must bear in mind that from Gilgit to beyond Altit the difference in maturity would run about two weeks. While I ate some of the last of the cherries at the Political Agent's table in Gilgit, when I got to Baltit I was eating the first of the cherries that the Mir had picked from his trees of exactly the same species and variety. In fact, I came upon many peculiarities caused by the altitude and the proximity to the river. In one place the fog plants, for example, were in flower and in other places along the route, they had already formed seed pods. Again, in other spots the seed pods had already burst.

This is not unusual, because if you examine the situation in the Niagara District, for example, at Queenston the cherries are in full blossom when in Niagara-on-the-Lake, along the lake, the buds haven't even swelled. There is a difference of 10 days to two weeks between Niagara-on-the-Lake and Queenston and the distance is a scant 7 miles.

The plant that impressed me most was the fog plant.

137 I've tried to locate it in my botanical encyclopedias but so far have met with failure. It appeared to be an annual but such a robust growing annual I have never known before in my life. (It could have been an herbaceous perennial—I'm not 100% certain. But I do know it started from the surface because there was no old wood or old stems on any of the thousands of plants that I saw and the hundreds that I examined closely.

If you know the winter creeper, or euonymus, then you can quickly understand what this fog plant looked like. It seemed to thrive in practically any location that would give succor to a living plant. In some places it was small and compact. In other locations it grew large and sprawling. It grew out of the rocks and hung down. It grew against the sides of the mountains and climbed up. It resembled, in many instances, a low growing shrub, but it was entirely void of wood. In other cases it grew erect and in still other places I found it sprawling around the ground in a wide area, making an excellent ground cover.

It is my estimate that I did not come across more than 30 different types of perennials or annual herbs. I am sure you will agree that it is understandable that the flora of this area would not be wide or tremendous.

133 Undoubtedly the valleys along the Nagir side were more lush, looked better and were larger than the cultivated areas along the Hunza side. One of the reasons for this condition is the fact that the Hunza side is more precipitous and the walls of the canyon or mountains are steeper and more sheer, leaving less opportunity for soil to accumulate, be cultivated and grow plants.

247 In the homes, from my observations, and I made careful study of this aspect, I did not see a sign of one

single house plant. This applies to the Nagir side as 247
well. Of course this is readily understandable when [354]
you realize that they have no glass or light. The only
light they would have in a Hunzan home would be the
bit that streaks in from the hole in the roof or through
the doorway. This lack of light would not be conducive
to growing plants indoors.

I recognized and found one lone dandelion plant and 137
believe me, when I found it, my heart was glad, gladder
than it would have been if I'd found a beautiful rose.
It has always been my belief and contention that
dandelions are found where'er plant life can survive
and this plant bore out (to a degree) my lifelong contention.
As long as a dandelion can be found, one need
not fear starvation. The greens of the dandelion, es- 000
pecially when young and tender, make delicious salads
. . . but remember, be sure to get the young tender
shoots. The roots are roasted and ground, and they
make a beverage that some authorities say is as good
as coffee. The root can also be used the same as parsnips.
Herbalists prescribe dandelion coffee for dyspepsia,
gout and rheumatism and they claim, with
sincerity, that it possesses most beneficial properties for
such ailments. It is also recommended by the herbalists
for kidney and liver disorders and Potter says it is
perhaps one of the most generally prescribed remedies
. . . "It may be given in any form but its beneficial
action is best obtained when combined with other
agents." Now besides all the above virtues, its flowers
and milky stalks make delicious wine.

This one single lone dandelion—the only one I saw 137
on my trek—had caught a foothold in a crevice of a
rock and was growing on this steep wall. I felt like 000
embracing it and pressing it to my heart. But if I had,

000 I would have crushed it, so I desisted. I'm sure I spent 10 minutes admiring, blessing and caressing that dear little dandelion.

So the next time you're in your garden or weeding your lawn and you go to raise your voice against the dandelions and perhaps take a weeding tool in your hands to play havoc with them and ruthlessly cleave them from your lawn and garden, think of Tobe pressing that lonely little dandelion plant to his heart . . . this poor, lone dandelion struggling against the harsh elements and millions of tons of hard rock on a little perch in the high Karakorums. There is Tobe speaking to that gold-headed flower and plant, as though it were a lifelong friend that he has met or encountered in an outlandish place—yes, there on the true roof of the world! Allow a drop of milk of human kindness to drip from your heart. After all, a dandelion has green leaves and a truly beautiful, soft, luxurious looking, golden flower!

* * * * *

136 I was almost tempted to leave out this part about the fauna in the Hunza area, primarily due to the fact that I didn't see much fauna. Not being a hunter, I didn't go after any animals and very few crossed my path. However, in describing the fauna of a country, I guess it is not absolutely essential that one see all of the specimens with his own eyes in order to describe them or tell about them.

000 I recalled that some years ago I took a trip through Alaska and the Yukon and, in a trek that encompassed well over 4,000 miles up and back, all I had to show for my perseverance was the sight of one moose. But that would not, as you well understand, indicate that there were no animals in the Yukon and Alaska area, because that area abounds with wildlife. So I'll have to let that yardstick stand for Hunza, too.

I didn't see any water buffalo in Hunza itself, but they are to be found in the Gilgit area and therefore I suspect they are to be found, if not in the principality of Hunza, at least in close proximity. Well, if you find water buffalo, then there is sure to be the Mana or Lali bird. It's a medium sized bird that is very much like our cow bird. He perches right on the back of the water buffalo and works away like a woodpecker, picking out the insects that infest the water buffalo's leathery hide. Thus, he prevents serious injury and disease from spreading from the hide into the flesh of the animal. 136

This is just another one of the myriad of intricacies that follow in the paths of Mother Nature—how she seeks to balance things for the benefit of all. Here the bird finds a way and means of obtaining food and nourishment and the buffalo keeps healthy and everybody is happy!

Ibex are part and parcel of the Hunza scene. So are the ovis poli or mountain sheep which are actually quite scarce, but are found if one goes high enough into the mountains. The Hunzans call the ibex "markhors." I learned that "markhor" means "eater of snakes," for the ibex, which are actually goats, are known to the people of Hunza for this habit. This also indicates that snakes are found in Hunza. As a matter of fact, every now and then one hears or comes across a snake on the trail. When this happens on a narrow trail high up on a ledge and your horse rears on his hind legs, pawing with his fore . . . 'tis not conducive to a long and boring life! [825]

The Mir of Hunza is quite a hunter. He enjoys shooting and is a true sportsman. My friend, the P.A. at Gilgit, is also an ardent sportsman. Between them, they told me that they had bagged, at one time or another, crows, vultures, golden eagles, geese and ducks, pheasants (two kinds), chicoris (which are their partridge), 224 [643] 136

136 pigeons and doves. They also vouch for the fact that sparrows, skylarks, nightingales, canaries, magpies, falcons and hawks were part of the common scene throughout the district.

The P.A. told me that on his hunting excursions he has on a few occasions come across both brown and black bears and I know there are also leopards, because the P.A. presented me with the hide of one of them, which now graces the living room of my son's home.

Inasmuch as small animals are concerned, I don't think you'd find too many. They like to go where food is more readily available than is the case in the sparsely vegetated Hunza area.

[134] I don't think burrowing animals would be common to the district, because one can't very readily burrow through rock, and that is what 99% of the Hunza terrain consists of.

231 Incidentally, the goats that are kept by the Hunzan farmers are not by any stretch of the imagination similar to the larger ibex that are found in the hills. The Hunza goat is a diminutive fellow that is bred for its dwarfness and ability to give lots of milk for its size.

223 224 Apart from the fall duck hunt when myriads are felled, and the occasional hunt with shikari to bring down the renowned ovis poli (Marco Polo sheep) from the 18,000 foot pinnacles, Hunza cannot be called a hunter's paradise.

CHAPTER 51

They Chose Years Ere Comfort

I WILL NOT go on record as stating that some Hunzans have sired children at the ripe old ages of 80, 90 or more, because I have no proof of such occurrences, although this information was relayed to me by some people of authority. 842

Yet, I would not disbelieve or laugh at that statement, because from my studies I have found that where the human body is fed natural proper food, the regenerating process in the body can be maintained for a long time. Yes, and all the faculties can be alert and keen well into a ripe old age. Most certainly the people of Hunza have lived and still live, in the main, according to the laws of nature.

I would, without hesitation, accept the fact that the people of Hunza are longer-lived than most people. Everything about their way of life seems to lend credence to the tales. I investigated, I asked questions and 165

165 I checked as thoroughly as possible and there are at least a dozen men in Hunza over 100 years old and no doubt a hundred over 90. Yet the oldest man that I met was 105 years old but by his appearance, his speech and his activity, he'll be around for a good many years.

No, I don't think anybody was trying to fool me about their ages. I can't see what they could gain by it. On the other hand, I don't think I'd be the easiest man in the world to fool. At least my friends don't think I would be. If and when you meet the Hunza people, you will find that you accept them as a fine, upstanding, honest race. Therefore I cannot see why they would necessarily lie about their ages. Of course [217] no vital statistics are kept in Hunza and therefore they cannot offer proof by means of birth certificates concerning their ages.

I met a few groups of men, all of whom claimed to be in their 70's and over, and they were a mighty healthy looking bunch of individuals. Most certainly the average group of people in any part of America at that age wouldn't remotely resemble that fine group of Hunzans.

164 I don't think that is hard to understand. People who have been denied luxuries and who have had to work all their lives and spend a lot of time in the open air doing manual labor should be healthy, especially when they have good natural foods.

[165] It is my sincere belief that the ages and the health of the people of Hunza have not been too greatly exaggerated.

It is possible that I have strange ideas, but I've always believed that physical work and exercise have a lot to do with a man's health. Well, in Hunza if exercise will make them happy and healthy, they should be the happiest and healthiest people in all the world. There

There 164 [493]

are, remember, no transportation facilities whatsoever, except the Mir's jeep which the citizens of Hunza don't get a chance to use. There is no other wheeled vehicle in the entire country. Practically every step is a climb or a descent. So no one could really accuse me of exaggeration if I were bold enough to say that they're probably the most active and energetic people in creation. It could hardly be otherwise.

To illustrate another proof of their hardiness, all along the trail we met people from Hunza walking barefoot—from young children to boys and young men and old men. While some wore shoes, most of them were barefoot. They walked over sand, over gravel, over stones, over plain dirt roads without any misgivings. 147 [291]

I watched them with awe as they ran, walked and skipped over these exceedingly rough spots and I was convinced they must have exceptionally strong, sound. healthy feet and legs.

On a few occasions I watched the Hunzans digging with a shovel. 'Tis done the ordinary natural way there —barefooted. That certainly proves, at least to me, that their feet are in wonderful condition. Most people in America can't dig worth a darn wearing heavy boots! [412]

It is unqualifiedly a fact, in my humble opinion, that the people of Hunza owe their splendid vital good health in part to these sound principles—their way of life, their food production and the way they prepare the fields for their crops—all accomplished in a natural normal way. Civilization may have many advantages—great discoveries have been made, machinery has been invented that does the work of many, many hands. In this modern machine age, a man need only work a couple of hours a day to supply himself with all the food, clothing and shelter that he can possibly use, but 164

164 obviously this type of living has taken its toll. Thousands, if not millions, of men are dying at 40 and 50, struck down by heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Well, isn't it strange that these diseases are unknown in Hunza?

000 *"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"* MARK VIII: 36

Of what use is it if man has leisure, food, clothing, the best and most comfortable of homes, if he doesn't have the years of life in which to enjoy them? What good is it striving, straining, sweating when you are young so as to have a pleasant old age, when there just won't be any middle or old age?

I'm not suggesting that anyone give up the comforts to which they are accustomed, but I would suggest that modern living has caused a softening or a decadence in the very fibres of our bodies, which is showing the result in the deaths of many men in their prime —at 35, 45 and 55!

If you had the choice of dying at 50 or living in Hunza under their austere conditions to be 80 or 90, which would you choose? Think it over. I know . . . you'd choose the 50 years of soft, modern, debilitating life because you are led to believe that it is a good life. Methinks you'd be making a terrible mistake. Not many men in America are smart enough to live to be 80 or 90. In Hunza it happens whether you're smart or not, because you can't commit suicide by eating. If you want to die by your own hand, you've got to jump off a precipice.

'Tis true, the people of Hunza do not have any of the modern doubtful blessings to which I refer, but they do have, for you and all to see, health, strength, endurance, a smiling and pleasant countenance and many years of life free of disease and sickness.

I would very much like to have you ask of me now a question such as this one, "To what do you attribute the health and the long life of the people of Hunza?" 000

In reply I would just love to say, and allow my voice to ring both loud and clear, "Their natural way of living! The way they follow nature's path!"

While the above is absolutely true, it is not the whole story nor is it that simple. The path or road to health and long life is not an easy road. No, it is totally unlike the paved, graded, banked highways that we know in the West. It is exactly like the Hunza Road through the glittering peaks of the world's highest, most perilous mountains.

Good health and long life seldom, if ever, come to a man by sheer good fortune, luck or accident. My observations tell me that health and long life, like the price of freedom, are to be had only by eternal vigilance. One must continually watch how he lives, how he practices field husbandry, what he eats and how much he eats. It is absolutely true that the people of Hunza use no chemicals either on their farms or in their foods. To begin with, they do not have the wherewithall with which to buy them. Secondly, it is problematical as to whether or not they would take to them. But as I have related, they have taken to salt and some sugar, so the chances are they may take to other of civilization's titbits and ways, if they get the opportunity.

Yes, I feel that I have learned the secret of the excellent health and long life of the people of Hunza. I did not learn this by accident, either, but it gradually dawned upon me and came to light when I combined my actual observations on the scene, my close and insistent questioning of innumerable people, and last but not least, from actual scientific research in an ap- 164

164 proved laboratory by a qualified technician.

164 262 Their food is natural, simple, unsophisticated, without any unnatural, inorganic, synthetic additives whatsoever. There is no fragmentation in the foods they eat. They do not separate any part of the wheat when they make flour, nor do they separate any part of the other grains when using them.

252 Due to necessity they do not cook foods too much, nor do they cook any food that can be eaten and enjoyed without cooking.

Food is a serious, all prevalent problem. The few trees that they have and that they can grow must be protected for food, shade and timber.

However, I must truthfully admit that the reason that the Hunzans do not cook their food is because of the scarcity and inaccessibility to supplies of fuel.

751 744 Vaccination is not practiced and, as far as I know, is unknown in Hunza. Pasteurization in any form is neither practiced nor known. Chlorination is unheard of. Fluoridation is unheard of. No coloring whatsoever is added to any of their food, not even their butter.

263 439 Up until recent years the salt used by the people of Hunza came from the Shimshal area, somewhere near where the Shimshal River and the Muztagh join together. This salt is unrefined and used just as it is mined from this mountain area. It obviously contains many natural so-called impurities.

493 The only wheeled vehicles—two jeeps, in fact—are owned and used by the Mir chiefly for bringing in supplies, when road conditions permit. Therefore one must walk for every chore. There is no motorized

377 equipment used in Hunza with the exception of the electric light plant in the Mir's palace. Apart from what

401 I have mentioned here, mechanization of any sort is unknown.

312 Both the irrigation water which they use on their fields and their drinking water come from the Ultar Glacier. Therefore, their entire water supply is glacial.

241 [433] Their entire economy is dependent upon their agriculture and everything that is taken from the soil is religiously returned to the soil. Chemical fertilizers or chemical sprays of any type are unknown to the people. It may be possible that the Mir has used sprays in his palace grounds. He might have brought them with him from his visits abroad, but I saw none and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, none are used. I saw no insect infestation of any kind or type through my entire travels and investigations. In Gilgit I did see insect injury in a garden and it was apparent to me that the soil of Hunza was in balance and therefore it produced food that was balanced. Therefore, it is understandable, the people of Hunza are healthy!

262 The food of the people of Hunza is in the main, raw food. It is neither dissected nor desiccated, but is eaten in the whole. The only exception that I could find to this rule was in their milk. When they made butter, they drank the remains or the buttermilk. Of course, in due time, they ate the butter.

853 All children born in Hunza are breast fed for at least two years. Male children are often breast fed until they are 3 years old.

000 I do not intend to stress any one factor of the points mentioned above. I am submitting them to you for your consideration and study.

241 164 It is, however, my belief that their soil and location does not lend itself to mechanization and therefore their good health should continue. If they could mechanize, then they would not get the needed beneficial exercise which, as you can gather, is one of the important contributors to their good health and longevity.

842 The country cannot afford or support a greater population than exists there today. Therefore, they will have to practice birth control, which it is claimed they already do but with which I disagree, or they will have to send their youths out of the country, which, as a matter of fact, they are doing.

311 There is very little chance of finding or creating more arable land in the country. I believe they have practically every inch tilled now that is tillable. There is no land left in that part of the world that is yet to be broken.

000 Their land and their fruit trees are their whole life. Their health, pleasant dispositions and industry, which they possess to the highest degree, are their entire wealth.

578 Quarreling among children and adults seems to be something that doesn't exist in Hunza. I found close affection and love was the general, accepted pattern throughout the area. This is even more surprising when you realize that most of the houses in the villages are built practically one on top of the other.

181
152 It was clear to me that they knew no worries and that they create no worries. There was absence of jealousy, greed, covetousness and hurry. Their outlook on life is most unpretentious. They are proud people and do not grovel before anyone and they do not pretend to be anything but what they really are.

433 Every Hunzan farmer is completely self-sufficient, even though he might trade for something that is in short supply or that he would like to possess. He grows wheat, barley, potatoes, millet, cabbage, beans, onions, lettuce and occasionally a bit of rice. In their orchards they have apricots, apples, pears, walnuts and mulberries. Every family has sheep and goats and sometimes a cow or an ox, and occasionally a yak. They till

their own land. They spin their own wool. Then they 433
weave it into cloth from which they cut and sew their [286]
clothes. However he can also buy or trade for woolen
cloth or he can have his own wool woven for him.

They have little or no money. The few dollars that 436
he might get during the year would come from the 485
expeditions that congregate in the area and hire the
Hunzans as porters. And they are unsurpassed at this
difficult and arduous work.

A man has a right to inflict corporal punishment 593
upon his wife if she nags him. Perhaps that is why the
men of Hunza have that cheerful look.

The children are never neglected because the parents
are always at home. Further, the children do their 857
share of the work in the fields and are taught to do so
from early childhood. This also eliminates juvenile
delinquency.

The people of Hunza have splendid dispositions. 157
They are genial, pleasant, smiling and cheerful. They 181
have deep respect for authority, profound love of the
land, affection, compassion and understanding for their
neighbors and they are most hospitable to strangers.
They hold their heads high, their chests out and they
are strong, honest and hard-working. To me this showed 000
clearly and positively that people can live and that
agriculture can exist and thrive without chemistry,
chemical fertilizers, chemical sprays or synthetic medicines
and drugs.

They enjoy happiness without modernization, long
life without doctors, nurses and hospitals, democracy
without bureaucracy, law and order without police and
self-sufficiency without money. Part of the answer, if
not most of it, is their loyalty to and their faith in their
land, a pure case of unremitting agriculture and putting
everything back into the soil which was taken

000 from it the organic method of land use.

262 From what I have seen, I have deduced the fact that the people of Hunza use less fat of any kind than most people found throughout the world. Some nations may lack animal fats, but make it up by fats found in [133] fish. The people of Hunza have very little animal fat and no fish, for there are few lakes in the area and the only fish that are found in the streams are those that were placed there, in an attempt to stock the Hunza and Gilgit Rivers and some of the nullahs.

They do get some fat from the butter that is made from the milk of the goats, sheep and a few cows and yaks. They also get a bit of fat from their walnuts and the kernels of the apricot seeds, neither of which can be considered to be high in fat content.

Lest you think that this lack of fat would have some effect on the people, let me stress that there are no more energetic people found in the world and they are continually active.

251 As soon as fall sets in and the harvest is completed, they carefully select and store and prepare their winter's larder. Then they divide and apportion all of their foods so they will last them throughout the winter.

262 An important addition to their winter diet is a gruel or a soup that they make from the various grains and this is eaten with their chapatties.

515 164 Dentifrices or toothpastes or powders of any kind are not used in Hunza. Yet the people have unusually fine teeth. False teeth, plates or dentures are unknown. So even at the expense of antagonizing the toothbrush and toothpaste people, it would appear that these implements and concoctions do not create good healthy teeth.

* * * * *

000 I have debated within myself whether or not I should

make my findings public and there were many reasons why I felt that I should keep my findings to myself, the first of these being the fear of ridicule. My findings are so radical and unusual that they will no doubt be hailed as fantastic. Next, in this modern day a college degree seems to imply that when you speak, you speak with authority, with knowledge and with proof. For myself, I do not accept that theory, but it is accepted by the public by and large. I hold no university degrees. I am an empiricist. Call it quackery if you like—I won't flinch. I believe that the knowledge and experience gained through thousands of years is not to be treated lightly, that it ought not be discarded as soon as some pseudo-scientific fact is heralded by paid-for publicity in newspapers, magazines, radio and television. 000

Therefore, when the whole mass of statements and events are simmered down, they amount to the following: I have no axe to grind; I have no commodity to sell; I have no demagogic theories to expound; I am not a vegetarian nor a communist nor a capitalist; I do not seek a following; I am not trying to found a new religion; I do believe in helping my fellow man wherever possible, not by forcing my views upon him, not by brainwashing, not by repetitive jingles, rhymes or slogans, but by the simple expedient of reason; I seek to tell you what I believe, what I have seen, what I have learned and observed. Just how you use that information is strictly your own affair.

I have performed not only my duty, but my purpose, and that is to inform and enlighten you. If you do not see fit to use or accept the illumination, that is strictly your affair and I'll neither condemn nor applaud you. It could be that you regard this so-called philosophy of mine as naive or oversophisticated. Then I will agree that you have a right to your own opinion.

[pp.452-456 not processed]

CHAPTER 53

Hunza Health Secrets

RIGHT HERE at the beginning of this very important chapter, I want to state emphatically that it is easier to remain healthy in Hunza than it is here in America. 008

I realize that this may sound paradoxical and that many people will question the truth and the validity of this statement. But I reiterate boldly and clearly that it is easier to remain healthy in Hunza than it is here in America.

I have been asked over and over and over again by people in all walks of life and by both sexes, "What is the secret of the health and longevity of the people of Hunza?"

"There is no secret!" I reply.

"Is there a secret or mysterious food they use in Hunza that brings about their good health and long life?"

"There is no secret manna, food or jelly that is used

000 in the process of creating health and long life in Hunza!"

Here I have summarized my conclusions, which I believe account for the superior health, the unbounded energy and the long life of the Hunzans. Call it a set of rules if you like. I prefer to believe that it is the common sense way of life adopted by an intelligent people.

262 (1) Their food consists chiefly of natural fruits, grains and vegetables. Meat is eaten only on festive and other rare occasions. While grains—that is, the whole grains—are stored, they are ground for use in baking and gruel, only as required.

241 (2) Their soil is maintained by natural cultural practices. That which is taken from the soil is returned to the soil—both vegetable and animal.

461 (3) Most of the people of Hunza, including women and children, work daily in the fields. There is no Sabbath or weekly rest day, although there are religious holidays and festive days. Therefore, they work seven days a week . . . and in most cases, from dawn until darkness falls. Therefore, practically all the inhabitants of Hunza do their share of physical work. There are few, if any, completely sedentary occupations in Hunza.

262 (4) Very little fat of any kind is consumed by the people. The fats that are used consist of ghee, butter, apricot oil and negligible quantities of animal fats.

[241] (5) Complete absence of foreign additives. Nothing whatsoever is added to either the soil or the food of the people or the animals.

263 (6) Natural, unrefined salt was used by the people up until a few years ago . . . and this was an important factor in maintaining their health.

241 (7) No sprays or spray materials of any kind are used on their crops, and no unnatural chemical fer-

tilizers are used on their lands. 241

(8) All children in Hunza are breast fed. There is no 853
specific prenatal care, and the good health of the 843
mother is passed on to the infant . . . and the breast feeding gets the child off to a good start.

(9) All fruits and vegetables that are dried for storing have been exposed to the sun and air. No foreign substances are added or treatments used. 251

(10) Native herbs are used extensively . . . both as seasoning and as food. 262

(11) Glacial waters are the only waters used both 312
for drinking and irrigation purposes. These glacial 146
waters definitely contain many valuable minerals and nutrients, as revealed by laboratory tests.

(12) Apricot kernel oil is the most important source of fat. It is used in cooking as well as for salads. No solvents or extreme heat is used to extract the apricot oil. 262

(13) Natural whole grains are used broadly. There is no fragmentization in Hunza. While they do bake a bread, their chief form of bread is an unleavened type which they call chapatties. They are composed of whole ground grain made into a dough and rolled very thin. Then they are heated or baked slightly.

(14) Hunzans are light eaters. Their diet is comparatively meager.

There is no doubt that, if any human being were to 000
follow the health rules of the people of Hunza, he could regain or maintain health. There is no magic formula connected with this set of rules. They are simple and to the point. In fact, they are so simple that most people will doubt their value. To these people I would say, "All of the great things in life—the important things and things of value—are invariably simple!"

In Hunza the following established Western health 744

744 processes are unknown and unused: chlorination, pasteurization, hydrogenation, inoculation, fluoridation.

262 The single most important food, as used by the people of Hunza, consists of dried apricots and whole ground grain mixed together to form a toddy or a gruel. This is actually drunk cold and is enjoyed by all members of the family. It is usually partaken of during the late afternoon or early evening.

Their other important foods consist of the following: potatoes, garlic, beans, peas, carrots, tomatoes and some leafy vegetables. In fruits, they have mulberries, apples, walnuts and a few plums, pears and cherries. Grapes are used chiefly for making wine.

They grow a fairly broad selection of grains: millet, wheat, barley, rye, buckwheat and a little rice. Lucerne [231] or alfalfa is generally used for cattle fodder.

[245] The Persian Walnut is the chief nut grown in the area. Almonds are raised, and their cultivation is increasing. A fair quantity of apricot kernels are used.

Ghee is used for baking and as a spread on their chapatties or bread—the oven-baked loaf. Sour milk, buttermilk and curd are a regular part of the diet.

Meat does not form an important part of the Hunzan way of life.

Most foods are consumed raw. The lack of wood or other heating materials probably accounts for the paucity of cooked foods in their culinary art.

147 There are practically no cases of overweight among the people of Hunza. The importance of this factor cannot be overestimated.

000 The path to health is a simple, easy-to-follow road. It is the most natural way in the world to the people of Hunza. However, to follow a similar path in America would involve complications, difficulties and many frustrations.

I have personally given the matter much careful thought and consideration. My conclusion is that, in order to follow the Hunza principles of good health, one would have to own a small plot of land or a farm . . . or dwell in a part of the country where one would be close to a supply of natural foods. 000

But there just isn't the faintest doubt about it. It is the sure road to good health and long life.

[pp. 462-464 not processed]

CHAPTER 55

Treasured Gifts

EITHER I AM most naive or I have an awful pile of unmitigated gall, because I kept harassing my fine and wonderful friend, the Mir, with continued questions. Luckily for me, the Mir is a most understanding man and he tolerated my questions. In fact, I sometimes believe he welcomed them. 115

I recall on this day we were chatting in his sun-living room and I said to him out of the clear blue sky, "Do you have any hermaphrodites in Hunza?" 838

A puzzled expression appeared on his face and he shook his head and said, "I don't know what you mean. I never heard the word before."

I smiled and said, "Don't let that make you feel too badly because most people, even native born English or Americans in many instances have never heard the word before either."

I started to grope for another word that would

838 describe what I meant, when I spied the doctor standing close by. So I called him and waved to him to come over, which he did. I then said to him, "Would you explain to the Mir the meaning of the word hermaphrodite."

Now, as I have told you, the doctor was a Pakistani but although young, he was learned, having both his science degree and his medical one. With a flicker of a smile on his lips, he translated the word to the Mir in Urdu.

A glow appeared on the Mir's face and suddenly he broke into a chuckle and then it went on to uproarious laughter. I stood by mystified. Even the good doctor wore an air of puzzlement.

I waited a minute or two for the Mir's laughter to die down and then I said to him, "Tell us the joke, too, so we can join in the laughter. After all, laughter is something that should be shared."

At this he broke out laughing again. So we waited calmly until he cooled down. Then I said, "Now take it easy and tell me just what the joke is."

Containing himself as best he could, he replied, "Why I've got one of those things you mentioned working for me right here in the palace."

Then we all began to laugh. When it was all over, he said, "Strange you would ask about a thing like that. Actually I know of one other one in Hunza. That makes a total of two."

"If you are interested," he went on to say, "the name for hermaphrodite in Burushaski is 'mukhanas' . . . but enough of this!"

* * * * *

123 After lunch the Mir said, "Come with me! I have something I'd like to show you."

He then led me into the room I've been referring to

123 415 as his trophy room. There, neatly laid on a long table, was a beautiful ornate set of silverware, a three piece tea service. It was the most unusual and elaborate design I'd ever seen. I recognized it as the leaf of the chenar tree, which is similar to our maple. I do not profess to be a connoisseur or one who appreciates objects of art, but I did recognize this as being something especially fine and unusual.

He said, "This is from the Rani and I. I hope your wife will like it!"

123 481 He then presented me with a most unusual cane. It is made out of some native Hunzan wood, white in color—chenar I imagine. The handle is made very ingeniously, so that you have something to hold firmly in your hand, as well as a place to rest your thumb. Then the entire length of the cane and the handle were studded at regular intervals with what the Mir explained were pieces of ibex horns.

136 Ibex are found in the hills. They are a wild mountain goat, usually found above the snow line. They are a good sized, hefty animal, standing between 3 and 3½ feet high at the shoulder. They're sturdy beasts as they well must be to live among the highest and most precipitous hills in all creation. For agility there is no animal that can match them. They are crowned with long ridged horns curved backwards, usually black in color. These tough, imperturbable mountain goats reminded me of the people of Hunza and I thought there was a great deal of similarity between them. They are, as far as I know, afraid of nothing.

I'm not a hunter—I didn't go after them. Some of the men said they could be found readily. Others said you had to go far up into the mountains in order to find them. But by the number of horns of the ibex I saw in Gilgit, Baltit and all along the route I traversed, 136 I was of the opinion that the ibex are quite plentiful, and if anyone went to Hunza with the idea of shooting game, he could without too much difficulty satisfy his bent.

[224] Then, too, the rare ovis poli, the true Marco Polo sheep, can also be found in this area. While they are by no means easy to locate, if you took the trouble to arrange for proper trackers or shikari, I'm quite certain that within one or two days' travel you would find and shoot ovis poli. If you're going to try to tackle the Marco Polo sheep, make sure you're a good mountain climber, because they are seldom found below 16,000 feet and usually a thousand or two thousand feet above that.

I asked the Mir where the big difference came in between the ibex and the ovis poli. It seems that the ovis poli are larger with a body as large as that of a donkey and the horns have three distinct sweeps. Of course the ibex is a goat and the ovis poli is a sheep.

000 He wanted to know if I was interested in shooting them. I said, "No, thanks. There are many other pleasures I prefer."

I can understand and appreciate the shooting of game for food or clothing but for sport . . . well, I've always felt that a man can prove his prowess without slaying useful, harmless beasts. Let it be said in fairness to the sportsman and hunter that in most cases he protects, disseminates and raises more than he shoots and therefore he pays for his sport. If it were not for the true sportsman (and I am saying that qualifiedly and reservedly—the *true* sportsman) many birds and beasts that exist today would have been exterminated by wanton killers, who also sometimes parade under the name of "sportsmen."

I will go along further and say that the sportsman

who climbs the lofty crags around Hunza to bring down 000
the Marco Polo sheep or ovis poli is entitled to his bag. But after all, who am I to deal so generously with the life of another animal?

Then the Mir had for me two Hunzan hats of the 123
type that the men wear and also two women's hats, the 291
latter brightly colored and very neatly embroidered. [531]
He also gave me a bolt of elegantly embroidered red silk, displaying a young man and woman, a bird of paradise and what was more appropriate, a yak. Then last but not least, laying beside the other items was a white hairy mass, which for the moment I did not recognize. It was a yak's tail.

Then he said, "There is a pair of typical native Hunzan shoes being made especially for you and they will be sent to you as soon as available. I'd like to send the shoes to you later, because I am waiting for some new hides which some of my men will bring down from high up in the mountains when they've had a chance to bring down some of the ovis poli. I want you to have the best."

"I guess I can wait for the shoes," I jested. "The ones I am wearing, plus another pair that I have in my knapsack, will carry me back along the Hunza trail, I think, but I certainly will be happy to have a pair of Hunzan shoes as another momento of my visit to your most enchanting country."

Then suddenly a thought occurred to me and I said 302
to the Mir, "I notice all of your men are clean-shaven . . . that is, except for the occasional one now and then who has a little beard around his chin. Therefore I know for certain that you must practice shaving in Hunza. Yet I have seen nowhere a sign of a razor. Further, I'm reasonably sure that this is one part of the world that King Gillette has not invaded with his

302 safety hair removing instruments. So please tell me what kind of an instrument the people of Hunza use to remove the hair from their face."

[326] "I'll be glad to show you!" . . . and with that, he
displayed a homemade razor, one made by the smithy
of the village. "Similar instruments are made by the
smithys in the various other villages throughout Hun-
[795] za," he went on. "Our religion recommends that our
faces be kept clean of hair."

"I will also have a razor made for you and sent along with the shoes."

123 "Thank you very much," I said to the Mir. "I am very grateful. I was really and truly hoping you'd say that, because that is another item that I would love to add to my collection."

I didn't know how to thank him for all these very lovely gifts, but I was somewhat concerned as to how I'd carry them all the way home. It was absolutely unthinkable to ship them individually or separately because I certainly wouldn't want any of them lost.

With the exception of the silver tea service, the other items were things that I had specifically wanted and had mentioned at one time or another. The Mir had keen ears and each and every item that I had mentioned was there as a gift for me.

To my friend, Cec Brunton, he also presented a Hunza hat and a cane of a little different type.

Not being a hunter it is understandable that I would not appreciate an ibex or a Marco Polo sheep head as a trophy, but most assuredly I would hang or display all of the items that the Mir was presenting to me most conspicuously in my home. And if perchance my wife wouldn't feel that some of them were sufficiently ornate or perhaps were unbecoming to her living room, then I would proudly hang them in my office. In fact, I felt even here that I would be happy to wear that Hunzan 123 hat on my strolls during the winter around my home town. The fact that some of the villagers might think me a bit queer wouldn't bother me one iota, because I haven't the faintest doubt they think I'm queer anyway. So a little added fuel won't make much difference.

I hate to admit this but truth will out, so I might as well confess. I actually coveted a Hunzan spinning apparatus and loom, but I didn't have the courage to ask the Mir for one of them. I thought perhaps this might be a little too much. I was bothered by the fact that perhaps they needed it worse than I and I would be depriving them of it if I took it back to Canada with me. But I did want one and I tried to think of a way or a means of purchasing or getting one without asking the Mir for it. Perhaps my readers can understand my predicament. Here was a man who was doing most everything that a human being could possibly do for another, for me. I would have gladly paid him for the spinning apparatus and loom, but I knew he wouldn't take any money and if I told him I wanted it, it might be an imposition—I knew he would get it for me. So after debating the matter with myself in my mind—which took probably 5 seconds but takes 5 minutes to tell—I decided to let the matter rest for the moment.

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CHAPTER 57

So Long--But Not Good-Bye, I Hope

500 WHEN WE reached the dining room at the appointed hour practically the entire group of the previous evening was there. Both the Mir and the Rani were present, of course.

262 This was the customary breakfast and, as usual, I chose the Hunzan bread rather than the chapatties. Somehow I never could take a liking to the chapatties, but I did eat them in places where there was no alternative such as Hunzan bread. Their bread is truly one of the most delectable breads I have ever eaten anywhere. They must use yeast in making it because it is not flat like a chapatty. On the other hand, it is not high like our bread either. It is an oval shaped loaf about 3 inches thick in the center and about an inch thick at the edges. Yes, it is made out of stone ground, untreated, whole wheat flour. I can vouch for that because I saw the actual wheat being ground into flour.

Then there was ghee or yak butter to be used as a spread. Most of them at the table selected ghee. I chose the white yak butter. 262

Western types of raw vegetables on the table are conspicuous by their absence. I had all my meals at the palace and the only raw vegetable on the table at any time was lettuce and the lettuce, the Mir informed me, was from seed that I had sent him some months prior to my arrival.

So it is clear that vegetables like lettuce, celery, cucumbers, cabbage, carrots, radishes and such are not generally used in this part of the world as a fresh salad with meals. I do know they use onions and peppers. The onions that I saw were of the green type and I recall being presented with a bunch of them by a youngster who popped out of one of the houses on the trail. I gave him a small coin as a gift or reward. The child couldn't have been more than 3 or 4 years old and he shouted with glee and joy to his mother, holding the tiny coin aloft for everyone to see. He seemed happier at the gift of that coin than any youngster I can ever recall. I'm sure the big hundle of green onions was worth many times what I had given him! 123 436

I believe this illustrates just how scarce or unusual money is there!

This was a sad breakfast for me because now I was on the threshold of leaving and I wasn't too happy to go from this enchanted place. I walked slowly down the long staircase that led from the palace and the rest followed behind. 123

There in the yard was the jeep with the driver and a few servants waiting and watching. Our baggage was placed aboard.

I left a sum of 40 rupees with the Mir to divide among the many servants who had given so graciously

123 and generously of their services.

Then, with sincere good-byes, good wishes and promise of the Mir to come and visit us in America, where I promised him the use of my home for the duration of his stay, the jeep was off!

We were following the same trail that we had come up on, only this time Cec and I were in much better shape than when we arrived.

492 'Twas hardly more than 15 minutes before we pulled up at the end of the jeep road. The horses were waiting. Mine was a big black heavy fat pony and, I quickly observed, a stallion, to boot! He looked a little bit too bold for me but the Mir had assured me that he was as gentle as a kitten, strong as a bull, fast, sure-footed and intelligent. The horse Cec was to take looked very much like mine except he was brown. They were two mighty splendid pieces of horse or pony flesh. There was another horse in the group which we presumed was to be used as a pack animal.

291 I noticed when Jahangir got out of the jeep and was walking towards the horses and bearers that he limped somewhat. He was still wearing the pair of heavy, thick-soled and metal heeled army boots with which he had set out from Gilgit. Somehow this reminded me of the folly of trying to beat a man at his own game. The people of Hunza have been living with and under these conditions for 2,000 years or more and it is somewhat superfluous to say that they would have gathered by now the right kind of footwear to put on their feet. And here is what I found.

Practically all of the children wore no foot coverings. They went about barefoot. This I do not mean to infer as being the case only around their homes, but on the mountain crags and trails as well. Most of the boys and girls were barefoot, but there were some who wore shoes and these were similar to the general type of 291 shoes that are worn in the West, except they didn't lace up in the front, but folded over and your toes stuck out. This type of shoe could be purchased in any of the shops throughout Pakistan and India and even the small town bazaars offered these shoes for sale. It was a sort of heavy-soled sandal, although the tops did have a little more leather and it wasn't quite as open as an ordinary sandal. These shoes are called "chaplis" and are best described by saying they are heavy-soled, sandal-type shoes worn chiefly by the people who live in or near the rugged mountain areas.

Another type of shoe that was worn (or should I say, foot covering) was the actual native type. They were made of soft leather. To me it felt very much [237] like chamois or suede, but I know from questioning that it was made from ibex, sheep, cow or yak hide. The skins of any of these animals were used for making these shoes as well as other commodities. The soles, too, were soft but of a little heavier consistency than the uppers. They usually reached to about the knee and they were tied with a piece of string, usually around the ankle.

Occasionally I saw another type of foot covering and this was as old as time itself and consisted of rags wound around the soles of the feet and the ankles. I'm sure back before man learned to spin and weave, he used leaves and bark on the soles of his feet, as protection against the rough terrain and rain, snow and sleet.

I had already learned the reason for the open-toed affair. The fact that it allowed air to circulate around the foot is good enough reason in itself, but in the event of a pebble or a small stone becoming lodged in the boot, it could be shaken free without stopping and unlacing the boot and removing the stone. With the

291 open toes it could be just shaken out. These were the low or oxford-type footwear. Then the reason for the high tops on the other kind of shoes was clear. It meant that pebbles and stones and debris couldn't fall into them.

291 122 I learned, too, that in walking over trails of this type one should always have on shoes that were sewn and in which no nails were used. On more occasions than I can attempt to recount, I stepped on a sharp rock and the nail in my soles or rubber heels went piercing through the soles of my feet. I had to stop on each occasion, unlace and remove my shoe, then get hold of a suitable rock and bang away until I bent the nail so it would no longer prick the sole or heel of my foot. So if you ever contemplate walking on roads or trails of this type, remember my warning, make sure that your shoes are sewn and have no nails in them.

122 The pack animal that was prepared for us was good enough to ride—much better than either of the animals that we had come up with. So Jahangir decided to use this mare as his mount and he sent his guide scurrying about to see if he could locate another pack animal.

At the P.A.'s in Gilgit, Jahangir had told me that he was taking off for Hunza alone. Now here as we were leaving Aliabad, I found that a guide turned up and it was apparent from the words that were spoken that this soldier had come up with him from Gilgit. The insignia on his shoulder clearly indicated that he was a soldier in the famed Gilgit Scouts.

I asked Jahangir how come he had a guide and he then informed me that the Scout Commander had flatly refused to allow him to set out alone for Baltit. Apart from anything else, in deference to Jahangir's parents with whom he was friendly, he would under no circumstances allow him to make the journey without the services of a guide.

I can assure you that the Commander carefully 122
selected the man, too. Although he looked like a boy, he was tall—about 6 feet 2 inches—lithe, alert, in fact, as smart and as capable a type of human being or soldier or both as 'twould be possible to find anywhere. Not that Jahangir needed it, but he certainly was in "high caliber" hands.

Bearing in mind that the two ponies we had were 122
stallions, I began to wonder if we might not have some 492
trouble on the trail, because Jahangir's mount was a mare. To you, this may not appear to be a genuine source of worry, because in the West the horses used for riding are practically always gelded and this eliminates any risk of difficulty. So you either ride a mare or a gelding.

I thought to myself, "What would happen if either 122
one of our stallion ponies began to get ideas on some of these high tortuous, winding mountain trails?" I knew from my reading that it does happen.

A man can work himself up into quite a stew by thinking of such things, and by now I was greatly worried about what would happen if my black stallion did become rambunctious on the trail. So I made up my mind that I would give that mare as wide a berth as possible.

I buried my worries by getting busy and snapping 342
a few pictures of the type of houses that we found [126]
here at Aliabad. They didn't differ very much from those we found elsewhere. They were not as well built and as clean as those we had found at Altit, but they were still quite neat and tidy by most other standards. Practically all the houses are built one on top of the [361]
other, as close together as the undulating region would allow, and it sure was obvious that a person couldn't

342 361 keep many secrets from his neighbors. From what I saw, it was obvious that when a house was built in Hunza no attempt was made to level the ground but it was allowed to stand as nature made it and the house was erected according to the natural levels, dips, falls or heights.

As we wandered around the little Hunzan homes in this area, we had to climb up to get to this one, we had to drop down to examine that one and there were really no two on an identical level.

132 Then I remembered that the average annual rainfall in Hunza was 2 inches and to myself I thought, "Mighty good thing, because if it rained any more than that, what a quagmire this area would be!"

122 We heard the clatter of hooves and, looking up, we saw Jahangir's guide coming back and leading another horse. This meant we'd be ready to take off in a couple of minutes, so Cec and I worked our way towards the road.

Soon all of our belongings were firmly balanced on the horse's back and we were ready to start for the Hasanabad Bridge.

CHAPTER 58

Baltit to Chalt--A Long Hard Day

THE EXHILARATING morning mountain air and the expanse of blue sky, landscaped by undulating masses in the distance and sparkled with a wisp of cloud here and there, made the march seem like a living dream. How often since I have been home have I longed for a day to begin this way.

The climb into the mountains started the minute we crossed the bridge at Hasanabad. We were now taking the trail that had almost spelled disaster for me on the way in. Those twists, those turns, those climbs, those declines had just about worn my legs to stubs. Never, through all my years of work, had I ever known what the word "tired" meant until then!

As Friend Cec remarked a few days later when we discussed this part of the journey, "Never did I see you look so grim! If any man could be said to be dragging his rear, it was you when you reached the jeep!"

122 487 But now it was entirely different. I didn't regard the snaky curves and loops with distrust and misgivings as I had the other day. In fact, then, I remember hating every turn I had to take. Now, with a good mount between my legs, I felt elated, happy, cheerful. Even though I started off riding, I knew that I wouldn't ride very far because I enjoy walking too much. But, still, it was mighty nice to know that you had a good horse in case you needed it.

From the start in the morning we knew it was to be a hard ride if we wanted to get to Chalt in one march. There was a full 32 miles to go. It was actually 36 miles but I figured the jeep had driven us 4 of them so that left 32.

[485] Neither Cec nor I discussed or mentioned it but I think we fully realized that, if we felt it was going to be too tough, we could stop off at Minapin which was but 15 miles away and would find the usual rest houses there. Yet, I couldn't see myself holing up at Minapin for the night. Why, we should be there shortly after noon, I figured, and I certainly had no intention of calling it quits then.

Besides, my recollections of Minapin weren't very appealing. It was the poorest looking and the dirtiest town of all we had passed through. We had stopped [485] for a few minutes at the rest house on the way up and it had proved to be a disappointment. We couldn't get anything to eat there and the chowkidor expected a handsome donation because we stopped there and, I believe, had a glass of water.

Then, too, I knew that this was the stage for us to make time, as we'd have more protection from the sun because there were more trees in this area than there would be further down. Villages dotted the landscape [361] as this was one of the more fertile districts and towns

and villages are invariably built where there are trees 122
of one kind or another. So it was our best bet to tackle 487
the sun while we had some protection against it. [361]

I remembered also that in this area there were lots [133]
of nullahs and that conduits were found everywhere, so we could refresh ourselves with good fresh cold water all along the route. Further down there were very few nullahs or any other means of getting water except by marching down to the river's edge and this, friend, could be an undertaking!

At this stage the elevations ranged around 7,000 to 133
10,000 feet. I didn't carry an altimeter with me but I was informed that in some places we climbed to 12,000 feet. It certainly felt like it by the rarity of the atmosphere and the way my chest and lungs were behaving.

All through this broad area the mountain scenery is idyllic. It just can't be beat or improved upon, no matter where in the world you go. When I came up this selfsame trail on the inward trek, I was in no mood to appreciate beauty or mountain grandeur and I knew that I hadn't taken in very much. But now, I was determined to feast my eyes, my heart and my soul on the most beautiful, the most varied, the most awe-inspiring mountain vastness that is known to exist.

I was happy—I was carefree—I felt so light that I thought the horse wouldn't even know he was carrying a passenger. In all probabilities I'd never come this way again and I wanted that beauty engraved on my memory.

Through the years I had spent many weeks and months in the Rockies, from Alaska right down to the Mexican Sierras, and I believed the Rockies to be the most impressive range of mountains I had ever known. When I saw the Alps and compared them, well, there

133 was no basis for comparison. The Alps were pretty hills!

But here again was something entirely different. We flew through and over the Himalayas from Rawalpindi till we neared Gilgit and from the moment we saw the Karakorums I was impressed with their appearance of hardness, massiveness—yes, and their coldness, too, but they certainly weren't very cold here on our way to Chalt where the metallic content of the rock absorbs every bit of heat and seems to hold it. Whereas the [134] Rockies are mainly grassed or timbered, the Karakorums are bare, naked and distinctly metallic looking.

Of course there are bare mountains in the rockies and there are treed and grassy ones in the Karakorums but it's the exception, in both cases, rather than the rule. Apart from a bit of grass or a few trees in an occasional valley, the mountains in general were bare rock. It is indeed a tribute to the courage, ingenuity and resourcefulness of the people of Hunza and other races who live in these rocky valleys, that they can manage to eke out an existence.

In the Rockies anything over 10,000 feet is rare and unusual. When you hit 12,000, 13,000 or 14,000 feet it is an event of major importance. But here in the Karakorums, when you are trudging along, everywhere the mountains are 14,000, 15,000 and 16,000 feet high. It seems that the ridges all around you are 12,000 to 14,000 feet, with something like Rakaposhi occasionally poking up at 25,550 feet. Even that is nothing of any spectacular mention, because within a few scant miles as the crow flies could be found ten peaks as high or higher and dozens or maybe hundreds somewhat smaller, but still much bigger and more impressive than most found in the Rockies and the Alps.

Just to illustrate my point I'll mention a few, starting at the Afghan border and working over to Singkiang in China, and down a few miles to the Skardu district. This area covers a circle within a 100 mile radius of Baltit, but look at the peaks that are found therein. These are just a few of the ones over 20,000 feet high that are found in that small area:

Haramosh	24,270	Saltoro Kangri	25,400
Mukorum	23,050	unnamed	22,400
unnamed	25,868	Saser Kangri	25,170
Kampire Dior	23,434	unnamed	21,270
unnamed	21,200	unnamed	22,891
Kanjut Sar	25,460	Nanga Parbat	26,660
unnamed	23,440	unnamed	21,870
unnamed	25,540	unnamed	22,200
Godwin Austen (K-2)	28,250	unnamed	22,120
		Rakaposhi	25,550
Masherbrun	25,660	Bilchhar Dobani	20,126
Gasherbrum	26,470	unnamed	21,907
Teram Kangri	24,489	unnamed	23,890

This list was taken from the actual military map of the area. Nowhere else could I find anything as detailed.

It is a positive fact that so far there are more than 60 summits over 22,000 feet recorded in the Karakorums alone—mostly unnamed and unconquered—and remember, the Karakorums extend only for 300 miles.

I'm not trying to impress you with a mass of figures, but I just wish to lend credence to the facts that will bear out my contention that this is the most spectacular outcropping of mountains and peaks in the entire world and that this point has the right and probably the only right, to be called the true "Roof of the World."

Maps refer to this territory as the Pamirs. I think they say Afghanistan Pamir, Russian Pamir, Chinese Pamir. The word "pamir" in Persian means "roof of the world." If the world has a roof, then without ques-

133 tion or doubt, this area holds that lofty title!

I know that Tibet is called the "Roof of the World" but it is my contention that this is not right. Lhasa is at an elevation of approximately 13,000 feet and is surrounded by peaks whose heights are not more than 18,000 feet, whereas Baltit, the capital of Hunza, is located at an elevation of 8500 feet and the mountains surrounding it go well above 25,000 feet. So I don't think anyone can argue or deny that this, the Hunza area, is the true "Roof of the World."

122 133 At the time I visited Hunza, maps of the Kashmir and Jammu and Gilgit agencies were hard to come by and anyone holding them might be arrested and charged with being a spy by the military authorities in Pakistan or India, because that area is zealously guarded by both sides.

It was a major operation to get a map of that area showing the various territories, the peaks and the ranges and such, but with the aid of a good friend I managed to procure a very good one.

133 For anyone interested in mountains, glaciers, hidden valleys and such things as dreams are made of, this map makes fabulous reading and studying. Besides, you can daydream away pleasant, carefree, happy hours like mad, if so inclined. Try it! Your cares will float away like bubbles!

122 Profiting from the mistakes of the past, when we found a nice cool comfortable spot, we stopped to rest and munched on the sandwiches that were so kindly prepared by the Mir's staff for us to take along. They were put into a little tin box where they kept in good shape. I would have liked to eat more of the sandwiches but after I gave one to Cec and had one myself, I passed the rest along to the guides and bearers. (Jahangir carried his own provisions.)

Actually, I think this in many ways is a mistake. 122 Anything that you bring along for yourself on a trail like this should be kept for yourself and the reason is clear and obvious. On the trail both coming and going neither group of bearers or guides offered us as much as a nibble, whereas in every case anything that we had we passed along or shared with them.

The reason I contend this is wrong is simple. They are in their own territory. They know where food and water are available. I know, as I saw them procure it when they wanted it. In our case we were up against a stark, high, blank wall and had to ask for, drive for and pay for every morsel of food that we got on the trail.

If I were doing this selfsame job over again, I would plan my travels without worrying or consulting them one iota. Their opinions, their judgment and estimations are completely unreliable, when it comes to distance, time, height, depth, temperature—yes, and even dangers!

Now I'm not referring to the people in the category of the Mir or the P.A. or Jahangir. I am talking about the average citizen that one meets along the trails or in the towns or villages. While you are supplied with a 122 guide and bearer or bearers and you feel you can rely 485 upon them, they do not take into consideration that you are a stranger, a tenderfoot, and know little or nothing about the terrain and the place to which you are going.

I'm not trying to impress you with the fact that these people are ignorant because they are not ignorant. It is just that these things are beyond their ken and you must rely upon yourself and prepare accordingly. They have been ordered or hired to guide you to a certain defined place or to look after your horse and that is all they will do—nothing more!

122 485 This does not mean to imply that they are unreliable or unfriendly, because undoubtedly if you remained with them for any great time, you would become friendly with them and perhaps a feeling of camaraderie or loyalty would spring up. This belief has been confirmed by my conversations with people who have traveled through similar territories over longer periods. But in cases like this, where you hire a man for a day or two and you can't talk his language or make yourself clearly understood to him, the chances of getting any great amount of service are rather remote . . . that is, beyond the call of regular duties. In fact, I have learned and found that they will do only what they have to do and even getting this done will often take reminding!

122 The collapse of my friend on the first day out of Gilgit would never have occurred had we taken charge of the situation ourselves and stopped and rested every few hours for a few minutes, like any individual with common sense should have done. But we relied upon our bearers and guide. We were tenderfeet and stupid ones, to boot!

We were now beginning to feel like veteran mountaineers. It's funny how quickly a man can learn if his life depends on it. We weren't going to make the same mistake that we made coming up. This time we had no guide—just bearers—although Jahangir's soldier could be taken as a guide. In fact, he was probably better than most guides.

However, we were confident enough about the situation to carry on without any guiding or leading. I'm not trying to give you the impression that we were smart guys. It was just that we found out that there was no cause for fear or anxiety and once you beat that feeling, then you can go on through most anything.

From what I have learned about mountaineering, I find that this principle generally is true. When you know the natives and appraise and understand the country you are in, the rest is just a task. It may be a difficult one but a task that, with good management and a bit of luck, can be accomplished. 122

In this instance we had good horses—the best. Secondly, we knew and understood the regions through which we must travel. Then, we had prepared a bit of food. But on top of it all, we were masters of the situation and we were not depending on anyone else!

The worst part of the day was from about 10 A.M. until 2 P.M. After that the sun and heat slowly headed downwards.

It was about 1.30 when we went through Minapin. This is normally the first stopping place from Baltit. We'd been up and about and on the trail for almost 8 steady, heat-filled hours, but we never even considered the idea of staying there. [485]

However, this was where the owner of the pack horse lived—the one that Jahangir's guide had managed to procure at Kerimabad—so we had to unload it. Jahangir dismounted and the luggage and all the trappings were carefully tied to fit around this horse that the Mir had sent along as a pack animal.

I took no part in the proceedings. Jahangir and his guide, as well as the two bearers, did the job and they did it right, unlike our first experience when we left Gilgit. We hadn't gone a mile along the Gilgit River when we began to have trouble, and hadn't we been at least half awake, we would have lost some of our belongings.

Here it was different. Whether it was due to the fact that we had Hunzan bearers, as compared to Gilgitis, 122 or the fact that Jahangir and his guide were on the job, I don't know, but the loading of the horse was done properly.

"Why don't you arrange for another pack animal?" I asked Jahangir.

"In the first place, I don't know if I can get one. Then it would take a lot of time, especially if we want to make Chalt before night."

"But how's your foot?"

"Oh, I think it'll be all right," he said, smiling. At the same time he flexed his toes by standing on them a couple of times to see how his sore, chafed heel was taking the jolt.

"I know little or nothing about the mountains and climbing but it would be foolish if we went on and you ran into difficulty, when, by waiting a few minutes or even an hour or two, we could save you pain and trouble."

"Oh, I'm confident everything will be all right," he replied.

"Anyway, I'm not riding very much. So that hefty pony is available any minute you want him."

"No, thanks. I'll get along without him. I feel fine."

Now I had the feeling that Jahangir was somewhat annoyed at the Mir because the Mir had neglected to send along a horse for him. However, I have no proof or knowledge of this because first of all, Jahangir hadn't asked for one and secondly, he had come to Hunza with a guide without horse or pack animal and therefore the Mir would not rightly suspect or know that he wanted one to go back with. So all this may be pure conjecture on my part, but that was the impression I got and that's what I'm telling you.

ooo I had met Jahangir just as soon as we landed at the P.A.'s residence in Gilgit. I didn't know who he was

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CHAPTER 71

Misconceptions

121 THIS CHAPTER I find the hardest of all the chapters in
114 the book to write.

So many gross errors or misrepresentations concerning Hunza have been given widespread publicity that I felt it was high time these errors were corrected.

[illegible] It is established that a writer or a speaker who makes statements must stand behind the statements that he makes. That is all well and good in such instances and cases where the truth can be readily verified by means of encyclopedias, dictionaries or other reliable sources of information.

197 Inasmuch as Hunza is concerned, this definitely is not possible. To begin with, the language, Burushaski, is spoken only by the people in Hunza, Nagir and in a small area thereabouts. Dr. Berger in his intimate studies and broad travels has come upon only one other spot on the earth's surface where a similar tongue is

spoken. The good professor espouses the theory that 197
the Burushaski language is genealogically related to
the language of the Basques, spoken only by a handful
of these people who live in the Pyrenees in southern
France and northern Spain. Therefore, it is difficult,
if not impossible, for any stranger or outsider to have
a good working knowledge of the language.

When you are given the name of a place or a thing 126
and wish to write it down, you have to do it entirely 192
by means of phonics. For example, I wanted to know the name given to a part of the flour mill and after much actual jawing, I wrote down the word "yine." Later, in checking with another Hunzan who articulated in deliberate, clearcut fashion for me, I got the word "yang." Now repeat those two words over yourself and see just how much similarity there really is between them.

I sought the name of the word given to the galleries 126
—that is, the wooden galleries or it could be the stone 192
galleries that were built up along the ledges when the 491
road fell away. One of the writers had given the name for these places as "rafiks," which I followed. But I also had come across the word "paharis" when I was in Hunza and they didn't seem to use or have heard the word "rafik."

Then upon investigation, I find that the words "rafik" and "paharis" are not the actual words used to describe this bit of fancy roadwork. The meaning of "rafik" is actually Arabic for a companion or comrade and the meaning of "paharis" is Urdu for "people who live in mountainous regions." From usage so far and the best of searching, it appears that "rafik" is the term used to describe the built up stone galleries that shore up a "fallen away" gap of road. "Paharis" is the term for the wooden platforms that are erected over

126 192 491 "nothing" where the ledge once led . . . a few well appointed steel rods forced into fissures being the total support. As yet I have failed to discover or learn the proper word describing these galleries.

114 I must admit that many or most of the errors or misconceptions concerning Hunza are due to the fact that insufficient time was spent by some of the writers who visited Hunza.

At first it was my wish to pass by this chapter on misconceptions because I did not feel that I should be involved in a hassle with other writers. But then I asked myself if I had any doubts as to whether or not I was right. And this made me feel that I definitely wanted to write the chapter on misconceptions.

It is not my intent or desire to be contradictory nor arbitrary. I am not seeking to pick a quarrel with anyone. But the facts and statements herein related are based on my seeing, hearing, research, questioning and investigating.

I have tried to make my book as accurate as humanly possible. And if and when errors are found, I trust they will be brought quite forcibly to my attention. I would like to believe that if I can dish it out, I can take it, too!

134 *Fertile valleys*—Some writers have referred to various valleys in Hunza as fertile valleys. By the standards to which we are accustomed, there is not one single fertile valley in all of Hunza. That the soil is productive and the valley green and beautiful, no one will deny. But at best the soil in Hunza is shallow and to be productive, it must be maintained assiduously. I repeat, in Hunza there are no such things as naturally fertile valleys as compared, for example, to parts of the Willamette Valley in Oregon.

131 133 *Hunza is scarcely* 60 *miles long,* says one writer. Another says it is 80 miles long and elsewhere I saw it

mentioned as being 100 miles long. 131

A few miles above the spot where the Hunza River 133 meets the Gilgit is a village called Secunderabad. It is here that Hunza begins and if you follow the Hunza River up to its source beyond Misgar, almost on the Chinese border, where it springs from a glacier, you will find in following the contours of the river that the country is almost 200 miles long. I have carefully checked this figure with the best authorities—the Mir being one of them—and I found that the 200 mile figure was as close as it can possibly be measured.

They are Asians. Of course they are Asians because 144 they dwell in Asia. But in appearance they are definitely unlike Asians. Without trying to sound dramatic or authoritative, the general appearance of the people of Hunza shows marked European characteristics. They are totally unlike the Indians, the Afghans or the Chinese. To me they looked like the Mediterranean peoples. At this stage I am not harping or relying on the fact that they claim to be descendants of Alexander the Great or some of his soldiers.

Primitive—Most writers refer to them as primitive 105 people or say that their way of life is primitive. I will agree with the use of that term in describing the people of Hunza, if you will agree with me that the Christian world is primitive, because it too follows the teachings of the Bible which was written 3,000 or 4,000 years ago. It is agreed that the people of Hunza follow a 105 primitive form of agriculture and use no chemical fer- 241. tilizers or modern sprays and insecticides. But then, they don't need chemical insecticides and chemical fertilizers. They use no modern machinery on their small, hard won, shallow surfaced fields. Their conduits which guide the glacial waters to their fields are, I agree, primitive, but no better form is known anywhere.

105 where. They use water to turn the mill that grinds
[376] their bread and that is primitive. But many thousands
of people throughout the world would say that it is
the right way. The adroitness and the ability of the
Hunzan men would match that of any people in the
Western world.

I cannot say that I found anything about them that was primitive. Further, they can choose the modern way of life if they so desire it. But the only people who seek it are those who are forced to leave Hunza because of the shortage of actual living room.

511 *Poverty stricken*—One writer referred to them as being poverty stricken. If the beast of the fields and forests and the birds of the air are poverty stricken, then I guess we would have to admit that the people of Hunza are poverty stricken as well. If you want to feel sorry for birds, because they have to seek shelter in their unheated nests high up in the trees, where the winds blow around them, and because they do not have oil heating for their nests or motors for their wings as a sign of poverty, then I will be forced to agree with you.

As long as the people of Hunza are free, have a bit of land to till and a house of their own that is not mortgaged or tax-ridden and are in good health and attain long life, I definitely cannot accede that they are poverty stricken.

142 *Fair complexioned*—Now and then some author re-
fers to them as being fair complexioned. I did not see
one fair complexioned person in all of Hunza. Perhaps
[144] the writers meant to say that they were Caucasians,
which is true, as compared to Orientals or Negroes.
They are not a fair people any more than the Span-
iards, Italians or Greeks are fair complexioned peoples.

805 *Precise, exacting.*—An occasional writer sought to

compliment them by mentioning among their qualities 805 the fact that they were precise and exacting. That statement is about as far-fetched as a statement can be.

In the cities of Asia and when dealing with government officials, one found them quite observant of time. An appointment for a certain hour was usually kept at that hour. However, in dealing with the people of [804] Hunza I found that time and distance were meaningless. All rivers were nullahs, all mountains were dorani. Haste and speed caused consternation. They did not understand the necessity or need for it. I stress again however, that in the official capacity this did not necessarily apply.

Birth control—More than one writer, and some who 842 should have had more common sense, has referred to the extraordinary method of birth control as practiced by the people of Hunza. From my observations I would state clearly and to the point, that they don't know what birth control means and it is from my observations and conclusion definitely not practiced.

The average family in Hunza consists of 7 people [163] which means that they have 5 living children. Many have more, some have less. If you can call that birth control by any stretch of the imagination, well, that's your privilege.

Even the most primitive of people know that as long as the child is sucking at the mammary glands the ovum somehow doesn't come down the fallopian tubes . . . nature's own method of survival, as common sense will indicate.

I know—I know—I know that some or many obstetricians and general practitioners say that it doesn't mean a thing, but they are just trying to prove that science is greater than empiricism. Sure, I know that conception can take place under the circumstances

842 mentioned above and so do women who have reached the menopause age become pregnant, but it doesn't happen every day.

Siring children at 90 *and* 100 *years of age*—The only conclusive proof or record that I could find concerning men well up in years siring children was that of the Mir's grandfather, Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, K.C.I.E. It is definitely recorded that he sired a son when he was in his 75th year.

Upon questioning and during discourse with the Mir, the resident doctor and the affected individuals themselves, it is clearly established that the siring of offspring at the age of 70 and upwards is quite common. Invariably it was revealed in these studies that the men had married younger women, their second or third wives. It is suggested that the answer lies somewhere close to this very important related fact.

165 [217] *Living to the age of* 140 *years.* The oldest man that I could find in Hunza was said to be 105 years old. I want to stress firmly that no vital statistics are kept in Hunza. Therefore it is not easy to establish any definite age or date. I will, however, accept this old man's age as being correct and established beyond doubt. The fact that he was alive before the Mir's grandfather was born (who died when 79 years of age in 1938) is ample proof that the statement is correct and true.

There are many people in Hunza over 90 years of age, quite a few over 95 years of age and some over 100 years.

142 165 *Their women are beautiful when they are* 70 *and* 80 *years old.* This I will agree is a statement that depends entirely upon a man's appreciation or understanding of beauty. I have seen old women of 80 who I thought were beautiful in a frail, wrinkled, grandmotherly way.

I found the Rani to be the most beautiful woman in 142
Hunza. I didn't dare ask her age, but I know she was married to the present Mir in 1934. Therefore she must be close to or in her 40's. She could undoubtedly pass with any woman in her early 20's. But there were few, if any, women in Hunza like her.

I further will grant that I, or anyone else for that matter, would have very little opportunity of seeing Hunzan women at what might be their best. To state my views candidly, I'd say the men definitely looked youthful, but the women looked to be older than their years.

Perfect health—I have never seen, as yet, a race of 164
people that was as healthy as the people of Hunza. But to say that they were a race that enjoyed perfect health, I would consider a bit of an exaggeration, because the doctor does treat a few patients now and then and the hospital does harbor a few sick people. I must honestly admit that I did not see any sick people in Hunza, but there are quite a few who do not enjoy perfect health.

A pre-Bronze Age people—Here I suspect someone 174
wanted to show his knowledge in archeology or anthropology, whichever it may be. (I am expressing *my* ignorance to begin with.) They are no more Bronze Age than was the writer who referred to them as such. This would take them back between 4,000 and 5,000 years which is utter and sheer "poppycock." He further [177]
stated that they were isolated for 2,000 years. If that is true, they were isolated because they wanted to remain that way.

It is a fact that there is a caravan trail right through 487
Hunza. It is the shortest route from China to Persia 177
and leads through Hunza, past Gilgit and across the Babusar Pass and then on westward or southwestward.

487 177 I am sure that a people who saw these caravans coming and going could not be called isolated by any stretch of the imagination. They just like their little piece of paradise too well to leave it.

133 *Hunza empties into the Indus.* Two famed writers who should know better . . . or should I say, should have checked more closely . . . made the statement that the Hunza River flows into the Indus. Even a cursory glance at a map would show that the Hunza empties into the Gilgit and the Gilgit empties into the Indus.

585 *Mother-in-law taken along on honeymoon*—This bit of stupidity, or should I say absurdity, appeared in no less than two of the foremost publications in America.

Who ever heard of a honeymoon in Hunza? Not having a Niagara Falls, probably they'd go up and sit on top of Rakaposhi with the mother-in-law between them to cool their ardor.

When the Mir made this statement, he was joking, never believing for a moment that anyone would take such a broad joke as being factual.

481 147 *Hunzans walk* 60 *to* 100 *miles as though it were nothing.* In fact, one author stated somewhere that the Hunzans could walk 60 miles easier than she could walk upstairs.

I will readily grant that I believe the Hunzan people are the world's best walkers and well they would have to be, because there just happens to be no other mode of locomotion. I'll even go further and say that all through my travels in that territory I did not once see a Hunzan man, or for that matter a Nagirwal, who appeared to be worn from the rugged walks and climbs. So it is clear that they have tremendous reserves of energy and stamina . . . but let's not go overboard!

486 114 *Anyone can visit Hunza.* Contrary to the assertion made by one writer that anyone can get into Hunza, I

would like to mention that since 1950 here is a list of all the people who were allowed into Hunza from the outside world: Franc and Jean Shore, April, 1952; Lowell Thomas, Jr. in December, 1954; Benjamin Ruhe in July, 1956; Barbara Mons, May, 1956; Dr. Allen Banik, July, 1958; and John Tobe and Cecil Brunton in July, 1959. 486 114

I've a letter here from the Embassy of Pakistan, Washington, D. C.: 486

"Dear Dr. Keller,

"Please refer to your letter of September 29, 1959, regarding your request to visit Hunza.

"The Government of Pakistan have regretted their inability to grant permission for your visit to this area. We would like to mention that we have received a number of similar requests from other individuals and we have not been able to comply with those requests.

"We have been informed by Dr. Francis Pottenger of Monrovia, California, that he and Dr. William Albrecht of the University of Missouri, also planned to accompany you on your proposed visit. We would appreciate it if you could kindly convey our regrets to Dr. Albrecht. We are writing to Dr. Pottenger ourselves.

"Yours sincerely,
A. Fatch, Second Secretary"

This should establish clearly, once and for all, whether or not it is easy to get into Hunza.

Court fines go to Mir's treasury. This statement was made by one of the writers on Hunza and when brought to the Mir's attention by me, it was vigorously denied. 652

Any revenue obtained in this manner goes to the state and helps maintain the canals and aqueduct systems. Further, the total obtained from fines during a year would not exceed 200 rupees, about $40.00. [312]

534 644 *The piano in the palace was brought by the Mir's grandfather.* This was stated in one of the books I read about Hunza.

The story from the Mir's own lips is, "The piano was brought to Gilgit via Bandipoor and Burzil Pass from Kashmir for the Political Agent who was British. It was installed in the Political Agent's house in Gilgit in 1895. In 1947 when the partition came, it was presented to me by the last British Political Agent, Colonel R. N. Bacon, along with the Union Jack which is unfurled in Gilgit. The piano was brought to Baltit on the backs of 24 men." [482]

164 *Disease is unknown in Hunza.* Oh, how I wish that were true! It was the fondest wish of my heart and soul when I left for Hunza that I could return and be able to attest the fact that disease is unknown in that country.

From definite assertions made by the doctor who was stationed at Aliabad in Hunza, it is true that such diseases as cancer, diabetes, heart disease and hypertension are absolutely unknown in Hunza. But there are other diseases, perhaps not as crucial but, nevertheless, maladies of a serious nature.

As more of civilization's luxuries become known and used in Hunza, it is assured that many more of the diseases of civilization, as yet unknown in Hunza, will make their way into that country.

165 *No infant mortality*—I am unable to speak for the past, but at the present day infant mortality is known in Hunza. As mentioned elsewhere in this book, statistics are unavailable as no records are kept. But the present doctor in Aliabad forcibly states that infant mortality is a force to be reckoned with in Hunza at the present time.

Hunzan fruits taste better than those of other parts of the world. Most travelers who reach Hunza invariably state that the apricots and other fruits found there are much better flavored than those found in other parts of the world. I did not find this to be true. 245

Because they do not grow fruits for export or shipping, they can be tree-ripened. Therefore they have a better flavor than fruit that has to be picked in a green or unripened state. It is this fact that makes many people believe that Hunzan fruits taste better than the fruit they are accustomed to eating.

I happen to live in a part of the world where fruit is grown extensively and I must state categorically that Hunzan fruit does not taste any better than that grown on the farms adjacent to my home. Here, also, it must be admitted that most of the fruit I eat, especially during the fruit season, is also tree-ripened.

The people of Hunza are ignorant and uneducated. 871 From my association with the people of Hunza, I must state boldly that they are neither ignorant nor uneducated.

There are schools of the same type as our grade schools in every large center in Hunza. It is admitted that only the male children are taught in these schools and there is no formal education offered to girls. This school system is entirely free and has been in existence for more than 25 years. It is emphasized that the native language of the people of Hunza is Burushaski and it is an unwritten language. However, they teach Urdu, Persian and other essential subjects. The intelligence and the abilities of the natives of Hunza rank with those found throughout the world.

The people are fierce and dangerous. There have [illegible] been only 3 cases of murder recorded in Hunza in the

682 past 40 years. Never to my knowledge has a stranger
[609] or a visitor ever been harmed or injured.

175 In bygone days the Hunzans were considered good
648 fighting men and were feared by the Chinese, the Afghans and neighboring tribes. It is a fact that they have only been conquered or beaten once in their history and that was by a British force that defeated them at the Battle of Nilt. The British did not seek to conquer the country. It was at the time when the British were the rulers of India. They requested that the Mir of Hunza allow free passage of the mail to Kashgar in China. The Mir at that time, Safdar Ali, felt that he could count upon the aid of the Russians and the Chinese and challenged the British authority. Then the British force went into the field and it required deliberation and courage to assault the high fortress, but it was accomplished by the British and the
[643] Mir fled for his life. The British then appointed his brother as the ruler and departed peacefully. Apart from this, the British did not interfere in the affairs of the Hunzans.

123 *You lose face if you carry anything yourself or do any work.* In all my travels throughout the world, including Hunza, I always did my share of the carrying. I wasn't going to stand by and see one or two men burdened down with my belongings while I walked about empty handed. I will not allow it to be said that I lost face because of this.

I don't want it to be thought that I am better than anyone else nor will I allow them to think that they are better than I. Wherever there was work to be done or burdens to be borne, I always did my share and I intend to keep on doing it.

131 *Hunza in the Himalayas.* Some writers keep referring to Hunza, Gilgit and Rakaposhi as being in the

Himalayas. They call Hunza "The Lost Kingdom of the Himalayas," "Himalayan Valley" and "Himalayan Region" and make other erroneous references. 131

However, truth is truth, fact is fact, and Hunza, Nagir, Gilgit and Rakaposhi are all in the Karakorums and the Karakorums are a mountain system of their own and are not part or parcel of the Himalayas.

How these misconceptions came into existence, I am not prepared to state, but when dealing and conjecturing with a country as fascinating as Hunza, that lends enchantment to the heart and escape to the mind, one can understand errors mushrooming into life.

Whether or not I have exploded any myths concerning this fabulous country depends entirely upon what you have read or heard and your individual viewpoint. I returned from Hunza with the conviction that I had seen, visited and been among one of the most fabulous peoples on the face of the earth. ooo

Perhaps I have shattered your illusions. If so, I am genuinely sorry because in this modern day and age, a man's soul needs some illusions and I would be the last man to deprive you of them. Yet, it was my purpose when I went to Hunza and then decided to write this book, to tell the truth and lay the facts before you as I found them. That is what I have done.

If I have failed you or brought your idols tumbling at your feet, I am sorry! Yet in spite of any shortcomings that have been exposed in my narrative, the little hidden kingdom of the Karakorums will always be "Shangri-la" to me.

CHAPTER 72

Reflections

I'd Been in Hunza for a few days, when it suddenly dawned upon me that there was something unusual about the demeanor, the countenance and the expression on the faces of people. I didn't allow it to particularly prey on my mind . . . yet that feeling remained with me during my entire stay and wanderings throughout that land.

I couldn't put my finger on it, but that intangible difference eluded me, though I was within reach of mentally snaring it on many occasions. Even after I reached home, one night when in a meditative mood, I went over this particular situation in my mind carefully . . . but I couldn't fathom the mystery. Still, I kept asking myself what there was about the people of Hunza that was so unlike the people of the West. Yes, and even unlike the people of the East . . . because there was that marked difference that distinguished

them from any other group of people that I have met 180
or seen anywhere.

I discussed the situation with friends and acquaintances. I mentioned it to folks whose experience and intelligence I respected—thinking, hoping that they could give me a clue to the answer. But nothing came of it. I was still floundering and groping about in the dark.

'Twas a blizzardly night in March . . . I sat in my office at the nursery . . . writing. Suddenly the answer came to me . . . and it was so obvious, so apparent and so simple that I am ashamed I hadn't come up with the answer on the spot.

Perhaps you are more alert than I and you have already guessed the answer. And if you have, I compliment you. You have your ears and your eyes open . . . and you have benefited greatly from the written experiences of my travels in Hunza.

The big thing—the important thing—the simple 181
thing that I discovered was the fact that the people of Hunza find joy and happiness in simply being alive. Living, in itself, is to them the grandest, the greatest and the most fascinating adventure in the world.

We in the Western world have 1,001 things to please us, to entertain and excite us, to thrill and enthrall us. The people of Hunza—they have their little cradle in the sun and that is all!

We must have cocktails and drinking parties to get ourselves into a mood. We must parade off to the theatre to get a laugh and relaxation. We go to a doctor or a priest for comfort and assurance.

The people of Hunza get their joy and pleasures out of the simple things in life—the natural, the commonplace, the ordinary. They are, from infancy to old age, continually attuned to nature. They are intelligent—

/8/ they look intelligent. Yet the happy carefree outlook of a child bespeaks their countenance.

800 We seek relief from our troubles and woes by entertainment, excitement, smoking and drinking.

Let us face the realities of life for what they are. Is it not a fact that our way—our modern way of living—has got out of hand and is now too much for us and we just can't cope with it? That is why we release our pent up furies and frustrations in drink and smoke. Is it not true that we have become a serious, troubled, dour race of people and that too many—yes, too many—responsibilities are oppressing our minds?

No people in the world's history have been so burdened with responsibilities as we in America. The world wars weren't ours, yet we had to become involved . . . and the world looks to us now to enforce or maintain world peace. And what a herculean task it is!

We have the burden of education—not only for ourselves, but for most of the world. Our people have become sick and disease ridden. We have to worry about the maintenance of elaborate homes, automobiles, appliances. We have to consider our vocations and our means and sources of food. We must be ever vigilant . . . there's both foreign encroachment and our own politicians to consider. We have to worry about mortgages, loans, financing, insurance, taxes, interest and the world's most expensive political setups.

We must not only be concerned about our wives and our children and ourselves, but we must share the responsibilities of our neighbors, our countrymen, and now, we have also included the rest of the world.

There no longer exists such a thing as individuality within us . . . for we are but one of almost 200,000,000 bees—all busy and buzzing in unison, creating a great institution. But who wants to be a bee in a hive or a number in an institution? 000

Let's face it! Isn't it true that our responsibilities are becoming too big a burden for us? Aren't we trying or attempting to encompass a little too much? Aren't we reaching beyond our ken—beyond our abilities?

You see, the people of Hunza aren't burdened with all the things I've mentioned above, and therefore, it is easy to see why they enjoy just being alive and healthy.

It must be recognized that the people of Hunza lead, 181 probably, what is the most simple life known to any people on the face of the globe. They are not trying to master the world, their own fates or that of their neighbors. They are busily occupied in looking after just themselves.

Selfish? I don't know. They certainly don't interfere with anyone else or ask anyone for anything. In Hunza a man's responsibilities consist of tilling a bit of soil to produce food for himself and the members of his household. The house is actually small—usually a two-roomed affair. He has to make provisions to store sufficient food for his winter needs—plus a mite for a neighbor who might run short. Then he may be called [653] upon to contribute a day's work or two a year on the roads or toward maintaining the aqueducts. And that's it! From there on out, his time, his life and his liberty are his own. They even have it better than the red Indians in America . . . because the Hunzans have a permanent abode rather than a windy tent.

Do you think that mankind can improve on a setup like that?

It could be that some of our difficulties stem from the fact that we try to work against nature, whereas in Hunza, when nature pulls the switch and brings on winter or creates other conditions that bring activities

8 to a halt, the people are resigned to it for the time being. They have found that they can't stem the avalanches or the receding glaciers. So they work with them, instead of against them.

It would be sheer "humbug" on my part to tell you that the people of Hunza have no responsibilities and no worries or cares, because we all know that no human being can exist on the face of the earth without some. But the people of Hunza have learned not to burden themselves with any more than they can help . . . and they stay quite clear of entanglements.

Most of their cares consist of sowing their crops at the right time, harvesting them before the bad weather sets in, storing sufficient to last through the winter and procuring a bit of fuel.

They lack the continued harassments of our modern, up-to-date civilization. One big thing to bear in mind is that the people of Hunza do not have an expensive, elaborate, many tentacled political setup. Hunza has a government of the simplest form . . . and apart from being an emblem and a guide, it does not interfere with or does very little for the inhabitants of Hunza. No government does anything for any people .that the people could not do better for themselves if properly organized . . . this holds true anywhere in the world.

Have we ever stopped to think just what a large proportion of our daily work goes for maintaining our government and for which we receive neither remuneration nor thanks? During World War II, I was astounded to learn that it took 30 men behind the lines to keep one man up front. I discredited it and refused to believe it . . . but subsequently, after tracking down the source of the report, I learned that it is true and that for every fighting man there must be 30 down the line to lend support.

Well, I had to accept the fact that there were 30 000 men for every fighting man . . . but no one will ever make me believe that it is necessary. Why this is, I don't know. But it seems that everybody wants to help to support a fighting man. Therefore, all and sundry latch onto the hero and do a lick here and there . . . and of course demand and receive good pay for it!

This kind of a setup, the people of Hunza do not have or subscribe to. Perhaps herein lies the distinction between paradise and the other place.

Now, let me get down to bedrock and examine and discuss the health of the people. When actually on the scene, one can easily get carried away. Therefore, it is wise to wait, and reach a decision after time has mellowed the experiences and observations. At present I am convinced that good health is a natural development of the way of life of the people of Hunza. And it will remain theirs as long as they follow the same simple life that they have followed for almost 2,000 years.

Should our modern civilization make inroads into Hunza's culture and should the Hunzans seek to derive the benefits and comforts we have in the West, they will have to pay the price as the attached tags will indicate.

If the people of Hunza want to buy into civilization, they will have to subscribe at the same rates as the others . . . by a breakdown in their health and a shortening of their long life.

It must be related that I am neither amazed nor astounded at the remarkable health of these fine people. To tell the truth, I'm not even surprised . . . because after I've had a chance to study the situation and observe it objectively, I ask, "Why shouldn't they be healthy, why shouldn't they be strong, why shouldn't

000 they have the powers of endurance that they possess? Heavens to Betsy, why not?"

They lead a life that nature intended and equipped man to lead. They eat the food that nature provided for man to use. They do the kind of work that nature expected a man to perform. In every case, they have cooperated and worked together with nature. Therefore, I cannot see where the results could be any different.

Good health and long life are the simple products of natural living—according to nature's laws.

Here and now, I refuse to become involved in a long harangue or bickering about the evils of modernization, of civilization, of chemicals, of fertilizers and any number of other questionable detriments. I am not seeking to curry favor with one group or to antagonize another. I am completely and whole-heartedly concerned with the why's and wherefore's of the health of a remarkable people.

I have earnestly sought to find a way and a means that I might contribute something of value to the people of Hunza—that might improve their health or aid in their longevity. I've had it drilled into me that with our knowledge, techniques and hygiene in hospitals, institutions, medical care and the healing arts, we are miles and miles ahead of any other people of the world.

After all, I've had this type of propaganda and knowledge pumped into me for almost 50 years—ever since I was a baby. And I believed it! But I learned, to my joy and surprise, that, when people live according to the laws of nature, the modern healing arts and their accoutrements and attributes are completely superfluous.

Would the big boons of modern civilization be of any value to the people of Hunza? Let's examine them. 000

Let's start with pasteurization. Well, it would be very difficult to pasteurize in Hunza. First of all, they don't have the means of providing the required heat. Besides, they don't suffer from any conditions which pasteurization would cure—if it does cure anything. 744

How about hospitalization? Well, they have a comparatively new, modern hospital in Aliabad, but the people don't use it very much. They distrust the hospital and they distrust the doctor, even though he is a fine capable fellow. Besides, I did not notice, particularly, any sick or ailing people sitting around, waiting for a hospital bed. 743

Then how about inoculations? To begin with, what would you inoculate them against? They don't seem to have many, if any, of our diseases. Then, too, there are no inoculations against cancer, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis and such, anyway. Oh, yes . . . besides, these diseases have never been known in Hunza . . . not even poliomyelitis. 751 164

The Mir has a huge medicine chest that was given to him by the German expedition, which was stationed across the river in Nagir. Yes, it did prove most useful —for it helped a man get well. However, I must admit rather dejectedly that the man the medicine chest helped was my companion and not a citizen of Hunza. 757 177 123

They could use a dentist and right here you have struck gold! However, it would be most difficult to get a dentist to set up shop in Hunza, unless he were given room in the Mir's residence, for that's the only place where electric power is provided . . . unless the dentist didn't mind going back to the old days when the old foot pedal was used for power. 759 164

But let's be realistic about it! Wouldn't it be much better to give the people of Hunza back their old [263]

759 natural salt, which was mined at the confluence of the
164 Mustagh and Shimshal Rivers? Then a dentist wouldn't
.263 be necessary. I trust you will pardon me if, here and there, as the situation demands, I become my own interrogator.

000 So after all is examined and said and done, how can the Western world help the people of Hunza?

If you asked me this question, I wouldn't want to answer it openly or boldly. But if you pressed me, reluctantly I'd say that the greatest contribution that the West can make to Hunza, or to their good health and longevity, is to stay away. Leave Hunza alone!

Somebody asked me if I would like to live in Hunza. In some respects, that is an unfair question.

It's like this. The climate of California is considered to be the most salubrious and pleasant in all of the United States. Well, why don't all the people of the United States move to California? Economic reasons? That might be a factor . . . but not a very important one. There are other considerations, too, I guess. But basically, everyone doesn't want to live in California—even if it has the most wonderful climate and they have sunshine all the time.

I'd love to go back to Hunza and spend a few more weeks there . . . and if I had been born in Hunza, I'm sure I'd never want to leave the place. But I doubt if, at my age, I'd be able to adjust myself to a change as drastic as the one I would have to meet in Hunza. After all, I am a product of Western civilization—whatever that is.

"Do you think conditions would be too difficult for you in Hunza?"

I believe a young, normal, healthy, strong individual of sound mind could adjust himself to the conditions of Hunza without too much trouble. I am not maintaining, or even suggesting, that the people of Hunza are supermen. I consider them every bit as good as we are . . . but I do not admit they are better, except physically.

I am not a Hunzaphile . . . any more than I am an Anglophile or an Americaphile. I prefer to call myself a Homophile. I like all people and all human beings—except the dastardly ones.

"Would you change anything in Hunza if you could?"

I think I have outlined, in a chapter in the book, that I could not make one suggestion that would improve their life, their health and their way of living . . . except to give them back their old salt mine.

"Do you think if I had a serious or deadly disease, I could cure it by going to Hunza? I'm referring specifically to a disease that is unknown in Hunza."

You're asking and I'm going to answer. If you went to Hunza and could live as they live and eat the way they eat and work in the manner they work, then I certainly believe that you would partake of the health that they enjoy. But first you've got to be able to get into Hunza . . . which at this time is . . . impossible!

"If some people from Hunza came to live in America, would they still enjoy their bountiful health?"

I'm ready with an answer. If they adopted our methods of eating and drinking and working, they'd probably run into the same diseases and illnesses and what-not that we have. But if they followed the way of life and natural living that they did in Hunza, I think they'd remain as healthy as they were back home.

Again, I want to reiterate at this time that I didn't go to Hunza to prove or disprove anything. I went to Hunza to see, to observe and to learn.

"Have you learned anything from the people of Hunza that can benefit you? In other words, have you profited, inasmuch as your own health is concerned, 000 from what you saw in Hunza?"

I'm glad to have the opportunity of answering this question. I believe the lessons I have learned in Hunza have already removed years from my appearance. I am healthier, more active and of happier countenance. I possess boundless energy and seldom tire.

Since my return from Hunza, I have drastically decreased my intake of cooked foods. In their place I am consuming as much as possible (depending upon my ability to make the change) of natural, unprocessed, uncooked foods. Today I say that the only excuse for eating cooked foods is that they taste good or have a nicer flavor and are pleasant and appetizing. But I do not believe any food is nutritionally improved by cooking, baking, frying or roasting. Again I repeat, you may improve its palatability, its flavor, its taste and its succulence . . . but you have positively not improved it nutritionally.

I believe that I can live to be 100 years old if I care to live that long . . . and if the good Lord is willing . . . by following the lessons learned in Hunza.

"If you are convinced that there are so many benefits in following the ways of the people of Hunza to health, why don't you start a crusade?"

114 Well, let's be sensible. Mrs. Lorimer did a very nice delineation on the people of Hunza in her writings. McCarrison did a terrific piece of work in showing people how, by following the health habits of the people of Hunza, they could maintain or regain their health. So did Wrench and J. I. Rodale, Unruh and others. But only a small segment of the people of the world—even among those who have read the books—followed the principles. What makes you think they would follow my admonitions and advice, any more than they did

000 those capable illustrious ones who wrote before me? I

am not a do-gooder or a crusader! Compliment me if ooo you wish, and say I am Socratic in my efforts!

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to present the situation before you. If you believe that I can be trusted and that I am telling you the truth, then you can also maintain or regain health and live to a ripe old age . . . by following the simple, natural laws that are part of the Hunzan way of life.

I, today, believe that the chief reason for the people of the West not adopting and taking up the Hunzan way of life is because it's too much trouble. Since my return from Hunza, my wife complains that she has a lot more work to do in the kitchen than ever before. For example, I used to love soups. So she'd take all the vegetables she could lay her hands on, including barley, rice and cabbage . . . and either cut or uncut, she'd throw them all into the big stewing kettle, put in some salt and pepper, a chunk of meat or a bone . . . and a few hours later we'd have a big kettle of soup—enough to eat for a couple of days. That's right!

Now she has to gather together (seldom does one shop have them all) at least a dozen kinds of vegetables . . . but better, 15 or 20 . . . slice them all up into small pieces or grate them as she often does, including potatoes, beets, turnips and spinach and incorporate them into my uncooked, raw salad. It takes her hours to do a really good job. But I demand uncooked foods . . . and salads are one of the answers.

Then to fruits . . . before she would put a can into the electric can opener, the top would come off and she'd dump the contents into a bowl and put it on the table . . . and there was fruit or fruit salad in one and a half minutes flat from can to platter. Now I demand at least 12 different kinds of unprocessed fruits in my fruit salad and she has to dice them up, slice them or cut

000 them and it must be made fresh all the time. She says if I want to eat like a monkey, I should go to the zoo or into the jungle. I, in turn, tell her that the monkeys in the jungle wouldn't have any human being in their midst if they could avoid it.

But there it is, folks. To live like the people of Hunza would require a great effort and many changes in our habits. Perhaps now you can actually see what I mean. I can just visualize my wife, or yours, rubbing dried apricots in water to form a gruel, along with a bit of oatmeal or ground wheat that has been soaked from the night before. Sure, it's probably one of the healthiest meals in the world—but who's going to prepare it in the prescribed fashion in this modern day and age? Not your wife or mine, you can bet your boots!

In thinking back, I felt that there in Hunza was one place on the earth's remote vastness where man is not always challenging and fashioning nature to his own selfish liking. It is here that nature teaches a profound, abject lesson to all mankind. By seas of tumbling peaks and towering summits, she reminds him of his insignificance, lest he should get visions of his own grandeur. Here, nature has truly marshalled her forces and has them piled willy-nilly, miles high, in a heap, so as to stagger even man's unsurmountable, egotistical opinion of his own powers.

Lest it be thought that I am making outlandish claims for the people of Hunza, I want to keep the record straight and in order. I don't know how you feel about figures and statistics . . . but it has been my experience that they usually reflect only that which the quoter of the statistics wants them to reflect.

If I go to a lecture or read a treatise, I want to be told or enlightened concerning the pros and cons of the topic. I, for example, judge a man's honesty as much by what he omits as by what he states. In this instance I am somewhat on the spot. I don't want to fall prey to the errors and omissions which I have condemned in others. I did pointedly seek and ask details concerning the ailments of the people of Hunza. I did seek to find out the diseases that are unknown in Hunza. I also wanted to learn the diseases that are most common and that generally affect the health of the people. And here is the picture. 000 164

They have trouble with their eyes. They suffer from stomach disorders—chiefly dysentery and worms. They are subject to skin infections, fevers, weak lungs, goiter and dental caries. Whether or not you wish to attach any great importance to the maladies I have outlined above, I feel that I should explain one or two of the contributing factors.

Remember, the Hunza homes do not have chimneys. Besides, they have so little fuel that they don't want to waste any of the heat . . . and the smoke is allowed to escape only through a hole in the roof. I don't know if this affects their lungs. It probably would. But I know that it does cause most of the eye ailments. [354]

Concerning stomach disorders, it may be possible that the ingestion of continuous quantities of mineral laden glacial waters contribute to this condition . . . but I am unable to state categorically if this is true.

Goiter and caries of the teeth have become a leading health problem. But these conditions were comparatively unknown when they used their native salt.

All through my travels in that area I did not come across one sick native. But that need not have any great significance, because sick people probably stay out of sight, and therefore they wouldn't come within range of my vision or my wanderings.

I must emphasize here that every man that I saw in

164 Hunza appeared to be the picture of health and contentment.

000 Since my return from Hunza I have become noticeably health-conscious. And I have been appalled by the number of sick, ill and ailing people around me. It is becoming rare and unusual to meet a person who will boldly say that he is in perfect health at 35 or 40 years of age. And is there a large mature-membered family about, who doesn't have one of its members ill, dying or dead from one of our many dread diseases?

No, I resent any insinuation on the part of anyone to the effect that I am overdramatizing or accentuating the picture or situation. I believe that every community in America has had additions or new hospitals built, and even with all that, they are unable to take care of the applicants who desire to enter them as patients.

No wonder people are interested in the "Healthy Hunzans."

Taking all factors under close observation and consideration, I have reached the conclusion that ours is a condition of ill health and that the people of Hunza enjoy good health. Whether it is due to their way of life, as compared to our manner of living, depends entirely upon what you are willing to accept. It is my conviction that we can enjoy the same health that the people of Hunza enjoy if we will live according to the rules and laws of nature—right here in America!

[pp. 639-646 not processed]

116

116 TEXTS--a full set of pages from each processed source, arranged in page order, as a means of establishing the context for any particular slip. Sets are arranged in the numerical order of the sources. See also:

Literary texts 539

8: Clark N-5 (1948-1951)1963
AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

600

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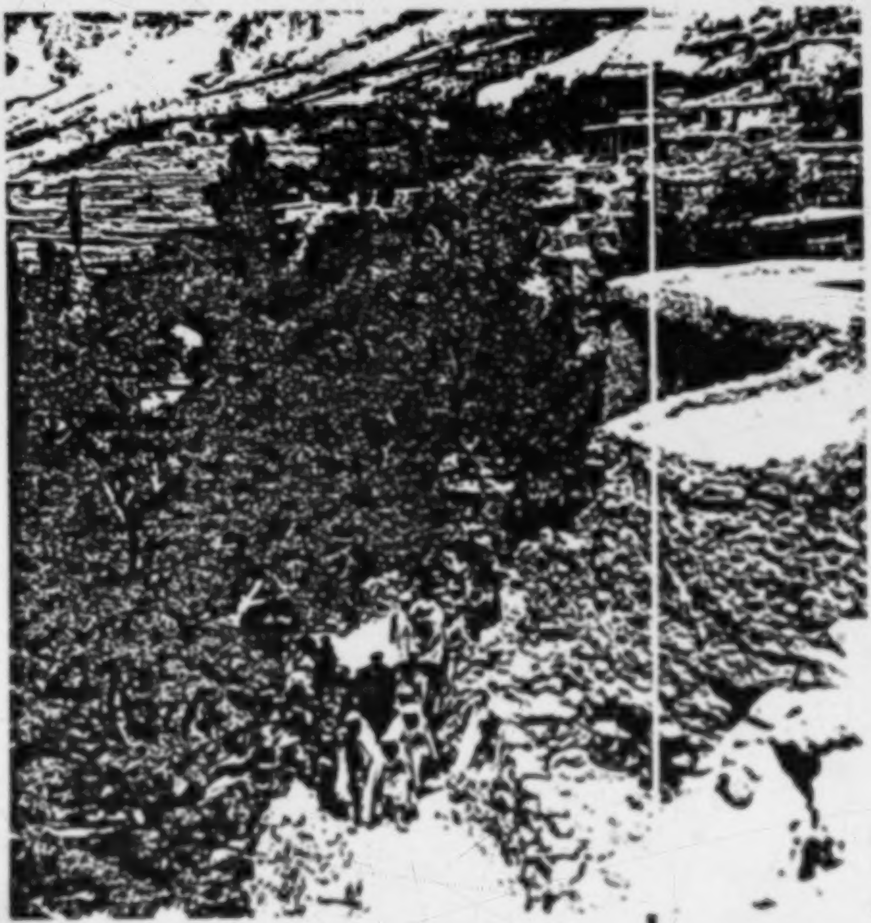

[P.38]

[caption appears at the bottom of photograph on p. 39-A]

8:Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963
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Hunza

[P.39-A]

Hunza in the Himalayas

Storied Shangri-La undergoes scrutiny

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TERRACED country, *left*, is ruled by the Mir, shown with village chiefs, above, at his palace at 8,000 feet altitude. Background peaks exceed 20,000 feet.

[P.39-B]

By JOHN CLARK

123
164 THE FOLLOWING IS AN ENTRY in my weathered notebook of a decade ago, written when, as an American living in the Himalayas in a run-down castle, I was operating an infirmary:

[576] "'Salaam aleikum, Hazoor! my trouble is very great,' said old Bohar. He raised his white-stubbled chin and pointed to the source of his pain.

"I looked and shuddered a little. Four oozing, open holes, each the diameter of a pencil, pierced his chin and jawbone. I asked him to open his mouth, and he complied, exposing a row of teeth worn absolutely flat. I ran my finger across his lower teeth; four were so loose that I was able to

123 pull them out with my fingers. Bohar
164 gasped. then relaxed as the extraction permitted the abscesses at the roots to drain more freely."

101 This was in Hunza, the small, moun-
131 tainous, Central Asiatic kingdom
121 bordering on China, Kashmir, and Afghanistan, about which there has been recurring publicity, characterizing the land as a Shangri-La peopled by men and women of extraordinary
121 health and longevity. Since the beginning of man's role as a traveler, tales of far-off earthly paradises have been brought home to entertain the untraveled. No matter how many such El Dorados perish under examination, the next is inevitably welcomed into the lists with unblemished credulity.

[text continues on p. 40-B]

8:Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963

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Hunza

[P. 40-A]

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Fabled elders of Hunza are products of rugged mountain life, scarcity, Moslem faith, and an autocratic tradition. If they exaggerate age, it is done to claim society's veneration.

8:Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963
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Hunza

[P 90-B]

121 In Hunza, say the romanticists, a race
[279] of Moslems—descended, according to their traditions, from the lost legions of Alexander the Great—exist in a Himalayan paradise, thrive on simple foods, live a life free of the corruptions of Western civilization, and reach ages of 120 to 140, the men still fathering children when more than 90 years of age. After being exposed to the realities of Hunza life, one feels more than a sense of irony when he comes upon these representations of a way of life that is among the bitterest in Asia. The "Healthy Hunzas," the "Democratic Court," and the "Land Where There Are No Poor" — almost all of this is born of too-hurried observation by Western tourists.

648 Politically, Hunza is a protectorate
206 of Pakistan, which controls its foreign

648 affairs, its defense, and its single tele-
206 phone line. Hunza pays no taxes to the
673 Pakistani Government. Instead, they
[651] are paid to the Mir, who is absolute
[622] ruler of the small border state. The Mir
[629] appoints an *arbap*, or village chief,
and a *chowkidar*, or local sergeant at
[627] arms, for each village. Local disputes
are tried by village chiefs. Anyone has
643 the right of appeal to the Mir's court,
692 which consists of the Mir, his heredi-
[645] tary grand vizier, plus the Mir-ap-
pointed chiefs of all the villages within
[illegible] walking distance of the palace. How-
ever, since the loser usually pays a fine
to the Mir's treasury, and the winner
traditionally gives the court a present
equal to the loser's fine, not many
795 cases are appealed. The Aga Khan
693 (literally "Grandfather King") is
spiritual leader of the Ismaili reli-

796 gious sect to which all Hunzas belong:
693 the Mir of Hunza is administrator, but
not religious deputy, for the Ismailians
of the Central Asian District.

114 THE notes about Bohar and his
teeth were made after I had
worked with the Hunza people for almost
three years during two prolonged
stays in the small kingdom. I was introduced
to this part of Asia as a
reconnaissance engineer on General
Stilwell's staff, and returned twice between
114 1948 and 1951. My primary
123 purpose as Director of the Central
Asiatic Research Foundation was to
discover what resources were available
to the Hunzas, and to teach them to
use these to their own best advantage.
From the start of my second visit I
operated a general dispensary with

[Text continues on p 41-A]

6: Clark N-5 (1950-1951)1956

AV7 Burusho AV7

Hunza

[P.40-E]

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Seclusion of the sexes is rigid from early youth. Hunza's Moslem girls, right, are destined to live almost totally divorced from the lives of men. Here two are chaperones.

8:Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963
AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

[P. 41- A]

114 Western equipment. (Training in anat-
123 omy, some concentrated informal
studies of Asian diseases, plus previous experience, made this possible for me. In addition, I ran three experimental gardens and founded a craft school, with the Mir's approval.)

164 Bohar had developed scurvy, after
146 which staphylococcus infected the
123 gums and abscessed the roots of his teeth; the abscesses had then eroded downward through the jawbone and out through the flesh and skin. After washing out the sores, I gave him vitamin C tablets to stop the scurvy, and vitamin D with calcium lactate to cure the rickets that were stiffening his knees. The old man was by no means
[752] atypical. My dispensary was always
beset by lines of waiting patients, all with afflictions that belied popular beliefs about "the Healthy Hunzas."

8:Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963
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Hunza

[P. 41-B]

164 beliefs about "the Healthy Hunzas."
123 Altogether, I was able to treat 5,680
[743] medical cases—the country had no
other dispensary—during my stay in
164 Hunza. My daily group of patients did
not suffer from many of the diseases
[158] common to our civilization. There
were no true neurotics; no cases of
stomach ulcers, appendicitis, or gout;
only one case of cerebral hemorrhage,
[412] and but four cardiac cases. The few
[149] bad hearts had been damaged either
by malarial anemia or by overexertion at high altitudes, as was the case
with one man who had carried the
Mir's piano on his back up twenty
miles of mountain trail. On the other
hand, my Hunza patients did have
malaria. They also had at least two
kinds of intestinal worms, and to see
for the first time a man with *Ascaris*

164 worms impacted in his duodenum is appalling. The disease is more painful than the ulcers Hunzas do not have. Hunzas also suffer from trachoma, pneumonia, tuberculosis, a fatal type of dysentery, and violent staphylococcic infections of their eyes, teeth, and skin. I never observed cancer.

Total blindness, too, often afflicts the Hunzas and is caused by staphylococcus infections, cataracts, and pterygium. (More than five per cent of the population had trachoma.) I cannot forget the father who brought me his nine-year-old daughter with both her eyes horribly swollen from staphylococcus. They came the day after I had run out of antibiotics. The next shipment arrived by caravan two months later when the little girl was permanently blind.

[Text continues on p. 42-B]

[P.41-D]

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[562] [584] **Mir's daughter**, the Princess Nilofar, is spokesman for Hunza's women, who, despite public segregation and their low status, never are forced to marry against their will.

8:Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963
AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

[P.42-A]

FAMILY LIFE on Hunza's flat roofs bespeaks the country's dry climate and the cramped quarters that prevail inside a typical stone abode, forcing inhabitants to seek increased living space in the open. A meal is being prepared, *above*.

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125 165 [123] One evening, I took a census of the nine teen-age boys in my wood-carving school. Of these, all from well-to-do households, how many had seen death in their immediate families? 165 Here was the roll:

551 Gohor Hayat: mother, three brothers, two sisters; Sherin Beg: one brother, one sister; Nur-ud-Din: mother, two brothers, two sisters; Md. Hamid: mother, one sister; Burhan Shah: one brother, one sister; Nasar Md.: mother, two brothers, one sister; Mullah Madut: two brothers; Suleiman: one brother; Ghulam Rasul: father. In a country fabled for the long lives of its inhabitants, these are depressingly typical Asian statistics. 165 576 Moreover, there is little reason to believe that any of the old men are really as old as is claimed.

"How old are you?" I once asked a venerable patient.

"Ninety, Hazoor!" he answered.

"How do you know you're ninety?"

"Well, Hazoor, my hair is white, and I know I'm very old, and ninety is very old, so I must be ninety."

[124] My teen-aged assistant, Gohor Hayat, broke in impatiently, "Why do you waste time asking such questions? [217] [212] You know there are no records, because so few of my people can write!"

I had thought the old man might have a way of keeping count. "How old are you, Gohor Hayat?" I asked.

Gohor Hayat responded loftily, "I'm

[text continues on p. 43-C]

8: Clark N-5 (1948-1951)1963

AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

[P.42-C]

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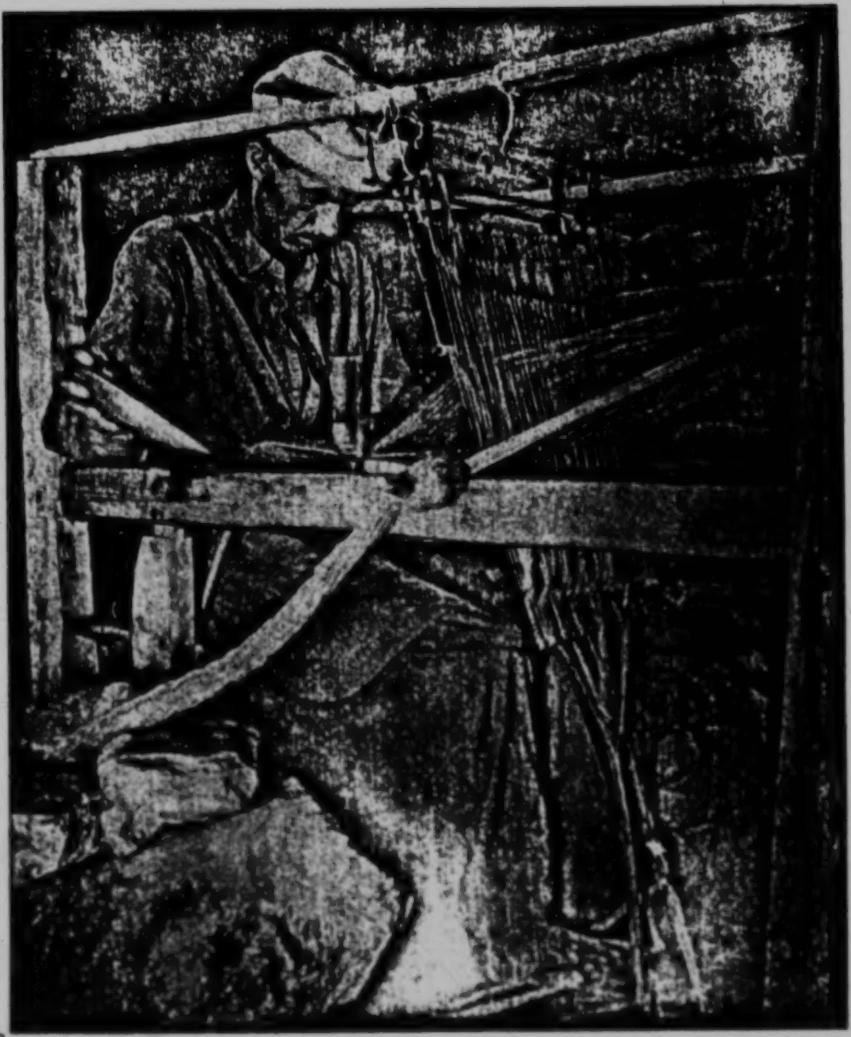

[463]
[433]
Craftsmen like this weaver are not numerous in Hunza; the demanding mountain economy requires the full-time effort of the society to raise food.

8: Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963

AV7 Burusho AV7

Hunza

[P43-A]

Scene more typical of neighboring Gilgit than of Hunza is this one showing boys at a community fountain. Until a short time ago, little if any pipe had been available in Hunza. Water, called "glacial milk," comes from ice sheets.

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8:Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963

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Hunza

[P.43-B]

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GRINDING of barley and wheat, above, is done by centuries-old technique.

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CHAPATTIES are the end product of the country's milling and baking.

8:Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963
[P43-C] AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

165 5% seventeen." Two years before he had told me he was thirteen.

165 [217] [128] Because the Hunzas, themselves, have no written records, I attempted to estimate longevity on the basis of physical signs of age.

165 145 THE elderly Hunzas, I discovered firsthand, show impressive dental evidence of being no older than sixty to seventy-five, not an unusual old-age [246] in Western countries. Owing to a lack of vitamin D and milk in their diet, the great majority of Hunzas have soft teeth. A young man of about twenty-one, just cutting his wisdom teeth, typically has six-year molars that are worn flat. This allows a rate-of-wear calculation that is relatively dependable in determining age. For instance, a man over one hundred years old, at this rate, would have all his molars worn down to the jawbone, but this does not occur even in the teeth of the very oldest Hunzas.

262 [214] "Purity" has been attributed to the Hunza diet, but the diet itself has seldom been more than superficially observed or related to its highly seasonal pattern. In the summertime the Hunza cuisine is limited, but not too bad. [272] Chapatties—shaped like pancakes and made of coarse, whole-barley flour and water—form the staple, and salted tea is the beverage. Mulberries, fresh apricots, cucumbers, and occasionally sheep-milk butter, round out the

[P43-D]

262 meals. By September, wheat replaces the barley, and fresh grapes, carrots,
[273] and some melons are available. The grapes are either eaten fresh or made into wine; the supply of both is always exhausted by spring.

796 Tumushuling, the great winter cele-
585 bration in mid-December, is a sort of delayed thanksgiving feast. December 19, the day before the Tumushuling celebration, is the day in Hunza on which all weddings are celebrated. Each bridegroom, accompanied by several of his friends, goes to the home of his betrothed and sits outside her door, which is kept partially open. Periodically, he hands in gifts of cloth, food, or perhaps even a dish or pan
[432] from Pakistan. Meanwhile, his friends give chapatties with butter, a real luxury, to any wayfarers who may pass by—a custom that encourages some travelers to take circuitous routes in order to encounter the well-to-do
[592] marriages. By evening the gifts are exhausted and the groom returns home, leading his veiled bride, who either walks or is mounted on a donkey. Tumushuling thus is a group wedding celebration as well as a harvest festival.
[643] The Mir gives a small gift, usually a
[401] piece of cloth, to every bridegroom who comes to claim it.

585 As in most Asian cultures, Hunza
583 marriage is civil rather than sacramental. The ceremony is really a not-too-symbolic purchase of the bride.

[P44-A]

584 Marriages are not arranged against
586 the will of either party, and although
divorce is legally very easy for men
593 or women, it is not common. Women
are neither abused nor overworked,
and the mother is the respected chief
of the house, as the father is of the
[581] farm. Marriage does not encompass
companionship as we know it; men
[562] spend their spare time in the company
of other men, and women visit exclu-
562 sively with other women. They hold
535 their dances on separate threshing
floors a half-mile or so apart, on the
same night, and woe betide the eager
teen-age boy who dresses in his sister's
clothes and sneaks into a girls' dance.

262 At the time of the Tumushuling,
[296] and only then, Hunza families
[231] butcher a sheep or two; cold weather
[265] preserves the meat for the few days
before it is all eaten—and it is virtually
all eaten. Even the long bones are
cracked to extract the last marrow.
After this taste of meat, the winter of
the dietary year sets in. Gradually the
supply of carrots and potatoes fails,
then the wheat, the barley, the dried
[148] apricots, and the tea. By springtime
the poorer folk may eat only once in
two days. No one starves to death, but
no one has enough to stop hunger.

148 The regular Hunza diet has no fats,
no animal proteins, no vitamin A, no
vitamin D, a deficiency of vitamin B,
and a serious deficiency of calcium.
Apricots contain some sugar and vita-
min C, but the poorer families are un-
295 able to raise large crops. (The size
556 of apricot orchards determines a
man's wealth and status.) Hunzas use
372 every bit of the apricot, as they do of
824 the sheep. They cut the pits from the
fruits, crack them, and remove the al-
[412] mond-like nuts. The women hand
grind these with stone mortars, then
squeeze the meal between a hand stone
[359] and a flat rock to express the oil. Apri-
cot oil is fuel for the saucer-shaped
lamps that illuminate their homes, as
lamps of this type have done since the
824 Bronze Age. The oil is very bitter, na-
276 turally enough, because of its high
content of prussic acid, fifty drops of
which are said to be lethal in about
[278] four hours. Men add a few drops, as
bitters, to their wine, and occasion-
[762] ally a despondent woman takes a dose
in order to commit suicide.

164 Mild cases of rickets and scurvy
146 are rampant every spring—not enough
to kill, just enough to loosen teeth,
cause aching knees, and deform ribs

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164 into the "fine, barrel chests" reported
146 by travelers. (I found that when they
took off their shirts the fine, barrel
chests revealed strong asymmetry,
with ribs notably warped by rickets.)
During my first winter, I developed a
typical case of beriberi, even though
my diet was more varied than theirs
and was adequate in quantity.

133 The basic trouble rests not with the
161 Hunzas, who are neat, intelligent, and
[181] hard-working, but with their country.
There is no flat land in all of Hunza.
[361] Villages and farms are built on alluvial
[311] cones—fan-shaped masses of gravel
dumped by streams rushing from
mountain glaciers down into the val-
leys—and the small cultivated areas
simply are not extensive enough to
support the constantly increasing pop-
ulation. (The Mir estimated the popu-
lation of his country at 25,000 in 1951.
According to one of the last of the
British agents stationed in nearby
Gilgit, Hunza's population was in-
creasing at the rate of 30 per cent each
[267] decade. Rising emigration and the ab-
sence of written records obscure the
reality, as one might imagine.)

311 Hunza's slopes are so steep they
241 must be terraced by the laborious con-
struction of hand-built retaining walls
of boulders. I measured one cultivated
slope of 60 degrees—so steep that the
retaining walls were twice as high as
the miniature plots they supported.
And sometimes Hunza farmers will
even create arable soil on top of bare
rock. After a crescent-shaped wall at
the foot of any fairly gentle rock
slope is built high enough so the top
of the wall is level with the top of
the slope, the wall is carefully chinked
and mud-calked, then sandy water
from the nearest irrigation ditch is
admitted to make a small pond. When
the sand settles out, the clear water
is drained, and more sandy water is
admitted. This process is repeated for
about two years, until enough sand
accumulates to allow cultivation.

134 Much of the "soil" of Hunza fields
311 is thus not really soil. Rather, it is a
jumble of unweathered boulders,
[132] gravel, and sand. Since Hunza is a
cool but exceedingly dry desert, prac-
[133] tically no plant food is formed. The
scant rain that falls soaks rapidly
through the spongy sand, leaches out
any trace of plant food that may be
present, and carries it down to the
river. Not even sagebrush will grow on
the unirrigated areas, so most slopes
are barren. Newly irrigated areas are

134 so sterile that Hunzas have told me, "If
311 you irrigate new land, you must eat for five years somewhere else."

241 Hunzas are skillful at building a
134 limited fertility into their sterile
[237] material, given enough time. All sheep manure is carefully saved, and the fields are fertilized with it four times during each growing season. Frequent irrigation works with summer warmth and mountain ozone to decompose the manure rapidly. The growing plants thus have a few weeks of available food after each fertilization, before drainage again removes the plant food. Hunza farming is actually hydroponic gardening, with the soil functioning merely to anchor the plants.

Plainly, the plants will receive enough of only those foods that occur abundantly in sheep manure. Nitrates, phosphates, and probably calcium are deficient. Yields of wheat and alfalfa are notably lower per acre than are yields from better-fertilized American acres. Apricot trees generally have reddish leaves at the growing tips, a sure sign of soil deficiencies.

433 Even the most painstaking hydro-
241 ponic gardening cannot compensate
237 for deficiencies in the food chemistry. Moreover, their system makes Hunza one of the few countries where an agrarian economy is absolutely dependent upon the pastoral economy.
[233] Even in the high mountain summer pastures, the sheep are carefuly herded into small cotes in order to preserve each night's droppings. Every few days a man climbs down the steep trail with a load of manure on his back. Effectively, the fertility of the high mountain pastures is being transferred down to Hunza's fields.

433 Unfortunately, the human popula-
161 tion has already grown so large that the fields cannot provide sufficient
167 food. Hunzas are moving out of their country in rather large numbers. Although the exact total of annual emigrees is unknown, it is clear that most of them go to the lower villages near Gilgit, where they soon displace their less industrious Sheena predeces-
[648] sors. Hundreds of Hunza's young men join the Pakistan army. Others take
[464] work as servants, where their honesty,
[181] industry, and common sense make them highly valued. The Hunzas realize, as certain Western tourists do not, that their country is a land of little food, and even less opportunity for the future, picturesque as it is.

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Culmination of wedding ceremony is enjoyed exclusively by male participants and spectators. Segregation of the sexes prohibits women, including brides, from viewing ceremony. On many public occasions, women hold a separate gathering.